SATURDAY
May 30, 2026

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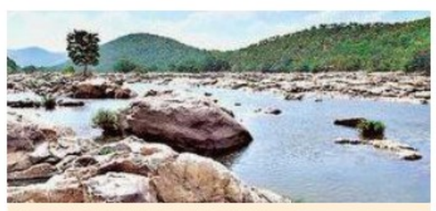

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# NEET leak left students, families traumatised: SC

Top court says paper leak points to 'ad-hocism' and lack of 'institutional memory and framework' within the National Testing Agency; PM is 'personally monitoring' the situation, govt. informs court

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI

Students and entire families have been traumatised by the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) paper leak case, the Supreme Court said on Friday. The court observed that years of hard work and emotional investment had gone waste even as the Union government said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was "personally monitoring" the situation.

A Bench headed by Justice P.S. Narasimha asked why the National Testing Agency (NTA), which holds the NEET-UG exam, repeats its mistakes when the Union Public Services Commission had so far made none.

> The real problem will not stop till there is actual accountability. Not in terms of so and so will be liable, it will be effective when we know which individual shoulders the responsibility. Unless you identify the specific duty-bearers, it will be difficult
>
> SUPREME COURT

The court zeroed in on "ad-hocism" in the NTA, and lack of "institutional memory and framework". The court directed the Ministry of Human Resource and Development to file an affidavit explaining measures it intends to take to tackle the lack of "physical and intellectual wherewithal" within the NTA.

The NTA maintained that the cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 and the transfer of the investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) themselves reflected the seriousness with which examination integrity was treated by both the NTA and the Centre.

"It is actually traumatic when something like this happens. Traumatic, not just for students, but for their families too. There is investment of so many years of emotion and study involved, and gone," Justice Narasimha said.

But the court also struck an optimistic tone, saying the situation was "not beyond us".

"We have some of the best officers heading these institutions. But they get transferred and take their experience and know-how with them. The knowledge is not percolated to the next group of people... It is not the individual who should have the memory, the institution must retain its memories," Justice Narasimha observed.

The cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 had left around 23 lakh candidates facing uncertainty over their academic future.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

# Hectic parleys in Delhi over Ministry formation; CLP to meet today

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Hectic parleys in the Congress continued in New Delhi over the formation of the next government as factions pushed for greater share in power when the new government under D.K. Shivakumar will be formed shortly.

While the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) will meet on Saturday to elect its new leader, the contours of the next government will also be known by then.

Meanwhile, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Friday accepted the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and has asked him to continue as the caretaker Chief Minister till the next government is formed.

D.K. Shivakumar meets Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Friday.

**On Dy CM posts**

One of the sticky points on which consultations have continued, a senior leader said, was of the composition of the Cabinet whether there was a need to have the post of Deputy Chief Minister at all.

While Mr. Siddaramaiah is pushing the party to decide on having multiple Deputy Chief Ministers to represent different caste groups, Mr. Shivakumar has been resisting the idea.

"The party had Deputy Chief Ministers in the past for various reasons. G. Parameshwara held the position in Janata Dal (Secular)-Congress alliance (headed by JD (S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy), and Mr. Shivakumar held the position on the strength of being KPCC chief. Such situation is not there now. There are fears that having multiple Deputy Chief Ministers could create parallel power centres that the party does not want," the leader explained. Sources said that the current deliberations were on to have two Deputy Chief Ministers.

Party sources also said that the discussions were being had whether a full Cabinet should be sworn in along with the Chief Minister or about 15 Ministers. "The discussions currently are on having a good mix of experience and also young faces. Ultimately, high command will decide on the Deputy Chief Minister posts and Cabinet formation as well." Another source said that it was likely that the new Cabinet could see about 10 to 15 new faces, and several seniors could be dropped depending on caste and regional factors.

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee on Friday announced that the CLP meeting chaired by Mr. Siddaramaiah will be held at Vidhan Soudha on Saturday evening to elect the new leader.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

## NEARBY

### BJP keen to counter DKS in his own style

BENGALURU
While the stage is being set in the Congress for the elevation of D.K. Shivakumar as Chief Minister, the BJP is preparing to face the new dispensation with an aggressive approach.
» PAGE 8

### Man killed in wall collapse

BENGALURU
A 52-year-old autorickshaw driver died after a compound wall collapsed on him following heavy rain in Vijayanagar on Friday. The deceased has been identified as Shivaboraiah, a resident of Attiguppe. » PAGE 5

PROPERTYPLUS » PAGE 19

## *Surf and sun*

A surfer in action during the seventh edition of the NMPA Indian Open of Surfing at the Blue Bay Tannirbhavi Eco Beach in Mangaluru on Friday. H.S. MANJUNATH

# Shutters down on 458 UG programmes in government first-grade colleges

**Jayanth R.**
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has stopped 458 programmes for Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc) and Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) degrees in government first-grade colleges for the year 2026-27 owing to a lack of enrolment, among other reasons.

In addition, intake has been reduced from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 150 seats in a total of 1,380 combinations.

There are a total of 440 government first-grade colleges under the Collegiate Education Department in the State, and there is zero enrolment for a total of 1,091 undergraduate (UG) combinations in these colleges for the year 2025-26. In addition, single-digit students have been enrolled in a total of 190 combinations.

The largest number of colleges with zero enrolment and single-digit enrolment are in tier-2, tier-3 cities and rural areas. In addition, enrolment has also fallen in many government first-grade colleges in tier-1 cities, including Bengaluru and Mysuru.

In addition, intake has been reduced from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 150 seats in a total of 1,380 combinations.
K. MURALI KUMAR

Among the UG courses in which students have not enrolled are optional Kannada, History, Economics, Political Science, and Social Science.

No students have enrolled even in Chemistry, Computer Science, Physics, and Mathematics in colleges located in rural areas and tier-3 cities, while several combinations of BA in subjects such as Kannada, History, Economics, Political, Sociology have no takers in many degree colleges.

Responding to a question raised in the recent Budget session by Legislative Council member K. Vivekananda, Higher Education Minister M.C. Sudhakar said that a review is being conducted to withdraw the courses with zero admissions from the last three years from this academic year.

**Proposal**

In addition, the Collegiate Education Department has submitted a proposal to the State government that the demand for some old and traditional courses in government first-grade colleges has decreased.

"If these courses are not withdrawn or the intake allocated for them is not reduced, affiliation fees and other fees will have to be paid to universities and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), which has become a financial burden. And, there is a possibility that the Cummulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) scores will decrease during the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) assessment," it stated.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 6

# '40 coastal districts may see temperatures rise by over 1°C'

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

About 40 coastal districts in India, including Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada and Udupi, are likely to see summer temperatures rise by over 1°C by 2040, according to the newly released "Indian Coastal Region: Climate Projections 2021-2040" report released by Azim Premji University, Bengaluru.

According to the report, India's average temperatures are projected to increase by 1.5°C, and the country's coastal regions are facing an imminent climate crisis that will reshape lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems within the next couple of years.

The report warns that the window for adaptation is rapidly narrowing as the 1.5°C warming threshold is expected to be reached across India's administrative regions in the near future.

A consistent warming trend is expected with summer maximum and summer wet-bulb temperatures projected to increase by 1.1°C in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi.

The report says that the country's coastal regions are facing a climate crisis.

In Uttara Kannada, the winter minimum temperature is projected to see the highest increase of 1.2°C, followed by a 1.1°C rise in the summer wet-bulb temperature. The annual maximum and winter minimum temperatures are also set to rise by a 1°C from their respective baselines in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, and by 0.9°C and 0.8°C, respectively in Uttara Kannada.

Precipitation data forecasts an intensification of both monsoon seasons in these districts, the report noted.

In Dakshina Kannada, the southwest monsoon, starting from a substantial 1,983 mm baseline, is projected to increase by 7%, and the northeast monsoon is expected to rise by 6% over its 243 mm baseline.

Udupi receives the highest rainfall among India's coastal districts during the southwest monsoon. It is projected to increase by 6%, starting from a massive 2,055 mm baseline.

The northeast monsoon in the district is expected to rise by 10% over its 219 mm baseline.

Uttara Kannada too looks at increasing precipitation trends. The southwest monsoon, starting from 1,539 mm baseline, is projected to grow by 8%, and the northeast monsoon to a 13% rise over its 167 mm baseline.

# IMD cuts monsoon outlook, pushes onset date to June

**Jacob Koshy**
NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday lowered its forecast for the 2026 southwest monsoon to 90% of the Long Period Average (LPA), down from the 92% it had projected in April, and acknowledged that the monsoon was unlikely to reach Kerala within the four-day window of its predicted date of May 26.

Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director-General, IMD, said the monsoon would now "likely arrive" in the first week of June.

The only time the IMD erred in its Kerala onset forecast from 2005-2025 was in 2015.

"It happens sometimes," Mr. Mohapatra told *The Hindu*. on the onset forecast going wrong. "But if you look at it, the monsoon system has been steadily advancing. It is hardly about 100 km away from the Kerala coast. I have said seven days, but it can cross anytime." The rainfall downgrade entrenches India's principal water source firmly into "below-normal" territory that the agency indicated in April.

Friday's warning, however, has raised the spectre of a drought. The IMD now puts the probability of a "deficient" monsoon (rain under 90% of the LPA) at 60%.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

M BG-BGE

K. MURALI KUMAR

# Does Ranji count? Examining the logic of picking Gurnoor over Nabi

There is more to selection than plain numbers. With fast bowlers, possessing attributes that supplement the prevailing pace attack is a serious consideration. India hasn't had a genuinely tall quick who can unsettle batters with variable bounce since Ishant Sharma's exit — this seems to have worked in the 6'5" Gurnoor's favour, but Nabi may still have the selectors' eye

**Vivek Krishnan**

For the scribes who spend any length of time covering domestic cricket in India, there may be jaded familiarity with a line trotted out by players aspiring for higher honours when probed on matters of selection. "Our job is to just score runs or take wickets, selection will take care of itself," is the common refrain.

A little over a week ago, with the announcement of India's squad for the one-off Test against Afghanistan in New Chandigarh, a fresh reminder arrived that mere runs or wickets don't always suffice. The nub of the subsequent critique directed at the selection panel from fans and former cricketers was this: do performances in the Ranji Trophy, the country's premier First Class tournament, really matter while picking India's Test team?

## Recurring question

It is a question that crops up usually when a Test squad is chosen close on the heels of a Ranji season, and overlooks the standout run-getter or wicket-taker.

You don't have to rewind to the distant past to consider the predicament of Sarfaraz Khan. For a span of three seasons from 2019-20 to 2022-23 – the red-ball tournament was cancelled in 2020-21 due to Covid – the middle-order batter from Mumbai churned out runs like clockwork. In the 2021-22 season, Sarfaraz rose to the top of the leaderboard with 982 runs in nine innings at a Bradmanesque average of 122.75. It came on the back of 928 runs at 154.66 in 2019-20.

> You don't necessarily pick a lot of seamers for a Test team in India. Nabi was close. There was a chat about him
>
> **AJIT AGARKAR**
> Chief selector

Yet, a call-up eluded Sarfaraz until the beginning of 2024 when he was drafted into the squad for the second Test of a five-match series against England. A handful of opportunities with mixed results later, the 28-year-old, a few kilos lighter but with his insatiable appetite for run-scoring undiminished, finds himself back on the periphery of the Test set-up.

The trigger for the renewal of this debate is the decision to name Gurnoor Brar in India's pace attack for the assignment against Hashmatullah Shahidi & Co. With Jasprit Bumrah resting after the exertions of the T20 World Cup and the IPL, Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna are the other pacers in the 15-member contingent.

Gurnoor's maiden call-up has seemingly come at the expense of Jammu & Kashmir's Auqib Nabi, who has produced jaw-dropping returns over the past two seasons. After claiming 44 scalps in 2024-25, the medium-pacer propelled himself to the front and centre of his team's epochal title-winning feat in 2025-26 with 60 wickets. Nabi's overall career figures read 156 wickets in 41 First Class appearances at an average of 18.37 and a strike-rate of 38.1.

In comparison, Gurnoor has picked up 52 wickets in 18 matches (average 27.30, strike-rate 45.3) over the course of three years. Last season, the 26-year-old from Punjab played just two Ranji matches and snared a total of four victims.

## Not good optics

Now, it isn't exactly good optics that a fast bowler who has honed his craft to a fine degree on the Ranji circuit is ignored in favour of another whose numbers don't quite scream for attention. To infer on the basis of these examples, however, that Ranji performances have entirely ceased to matter wouldn't be accurate either. In this very squad, for instance, the emergence of left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey, whose 69 scalps were the most in the 2024-25 Ranji season, points to his exertions in domestic cricket getting due reward.

As chief selector Ajit Agarkar explained during a media interaction, Nabi, whose rise from the spartan surroundings of Baramulla is an endearing triumph of human spirit, hasn't gone unnoticed. "You don't necessarily pick a lot of seamers for a Test team in India. Nabi was close. There was a chat about him. He has had some incredible performances for Jammu & Kashmir," Agarkar said.

Reassuring as that is for the 29-year-old from J&K, Gurnoor's induction underlines that there is more to selection than plain numbers. Whilst evaluating fast bowlers in particular, the presence of certain qualitative attributes to supplement the prevailing dynamics of the pace attack is an important consideration for the selectors.

> It is not only about someone taking wickets. It is also about the balance of the squad... It is not always about picking the best players. It is about picking players that play best with each other
>
> **JATIN PARANJPE**
> Former national selector

"It is not only about someone taking wickets. It is also about the balance of the squad and how players fit into that. It is not always about picking the best players. It is about picking players that play best with each other," former national selector Jatin Paranjpe, who is head coach of North Mumbai Panthers in the Mumbai Premier League, told *The Hindu*.

By most accounts, Gurnoor's ability to generate disconcerting bounce – he stands at 6'5" – at brisk pace ticks the right boxes. The first whiff of the Agarkar-led panel's interest in the man from Muktsar came when he was drafted into the India-A set-up last year. "With Gurnoor, we have seen a lot of promise over the last season-and-a-half. He's a tall guy with a bit of pace," the chief selector noted.

If India is to return to the summit of Test cricket, it is imperative for Shubman Gill to have at his disposal a well-rounded pace attack, of the kind that Virat Kohli marshalled during his tenure.

In this context, the urge to give Gurnoor a run-out is understandable, for he could be an ideal foil to Bumrah and Siraj. Bumrah, of course, is a cunning exponent of late swing with a bag of other tricks up his sleeve. Siraj can shape the new ball away from the right-hander, but relies primarily on the wobble-seam delivery to home in on the stumps. But both are at their most lethal when targeting the fuller end of the good-length zone. The likes of Akash Deep and Harshit Rana, who tend to move the ball off the seam, also operate at comparable speeds from similar release points.

Since the exit of Ishant Sharma in 2021, what India hasn't had is a genuinely tall quick who can consistently unsettle batters with variable bounce. Sure, there is Prasidh, six Tests old, with the tools at 6'3" to hit the deck and cause discomfort. But the 30-year-old has been impeded by an erratic radar.

It is worth remembering that the absence of a lanky, menacing operator was keenly felt on South African shores in 2021-22. At Johannesburg and Cape Town, where India lost to fritter away a 1-0 advantage, South Africa's speedsters leveraged their towering frames to draw more uneven bounce.

## A different profile

Nabi's strengths lie elsewhere. He is not very quick through the air, nor has he the physical gifts to extract considerable lift. His main ally is the capacity to find lateral movement without erring in line or length – think of his dismissals of K.L. Rahul and Karun Nair in February's Ranji final in Hubballi. The J&K spearhead can also get the old ball to reverse, as he did to great effect in an encounter against Delhi at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

For the moment, Nabi will have to stay patient. And perhaps believe in the cliche that his job is to keep taking wickets; selection will take care of itself.

**AUQIB NABI**

## STACKING UP

**ATP Men's Top 15**

| # | Player | Age | Points | Events |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jannik Sinner | 24 | 14,750 | 19 |
| 2 | Carlos Alcaraz | 23 | 11,960 | 18 |
| 3 | Alexander Zverev | 29 | 5,705 | 21 |
| 4 | Novak Djokovic | 39 | 4,460 | 16 |
| 5 | Ben Shelton | 23 | 4,070 | 23 |
| 6 | Felix Auger-Aliassime | 25 | 4,050 | 24 |
| 7 | Alex de Minaur | 27 | 3,855 | 23 |
| 8 | Daniil Medvedev | 30 | 3,760 | 24 |
| 9 | Taylor Fritz | 28 | 3,720 | 23 |
| 10 | Alexander Bublik | 28 | 3,320 | 25 |
| 11 | Lorenzo Musetti | 24 | 3,115 | 23 |
| 12 | Jiri Lehecka | 24 | 2,665 | 21 |
| 13 | Andrey Rublev | 28 | 2,460 | 23 |
| 14 | Flavio Cobolli | 24 | 2,340 | 27 |
| 15 | Karen Khachanov | 30 | 2,320 | 24 |

**Top Indians ▶**

Sumit Nagal
Rank 282 ▼ 7 spots

Manas Dhamne
Rank 394 ▼ 3 spots

**WTA Women's Top 15**

| # | Player | Age | Points | Events |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Aryna Sabalenka | 28 | 9,960 | 19 |
| 2 | Elena Rybakina | 26 | 8,313 | 22 |
| 3 | Iga Swiatek | 24 | 7,273 | 19 |
| 4 | Coco Gauff | 22 | 6,749 | 19 |
| 5 | Jessica Pegula | 32 | 6,286 | 20 |
| 6 | Amanda Anisimova | 24 | 5,958 | 17 |
| 7 | Elina Svitolina | 31 | 4,315 | 15 |
| 8 | Mirra Andreeva | 19 | 4,181 | 21 |
| 9 | Victoria Mboko | 19 | 3,710 | 21 |
| 10 | Karolina Muchova | 29 | 3,318 | 19 |
| 11 | Belinda Bencic | 29 | 3,145 | 19 |
| 12 | Linda Noskova | 21 | 3,054 | 22 |
| 13 | Jasmine Paolini | 30 | 2,787 | 20 |
| 14 | Ekaterina Alexandrova | 31 | 2,679 | 27 |
| 15 | Marta Kostyuk | 23 | 2,387 | 19 |

**Top Indians ▶**

Sahaja Yamalapalli
Rank 360 ▼ 2 spots

Vaishnavi Adkar
Rank 378 ▼ 3 spots

**English Premier League Standings**

| # | Team | GP | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | PTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | Arsenal | 38 | 26 | 7 | 5 | 71 | 27 | 44 | 85 |
| 2 | Man. City | 38 | 23 | 9 | 6 | 77 | 35 | 42 | 78 |
| 3 | Man. United | 38 | 20 | 11 | 7 | 69 | 50 | 19 | 71 |
| 4 | Aston Villa | 38 | 19 | 8 | 11 | 56 | 49 | 7 | 65 |
| 5 | Liverpool | 38 | 17 | 9 | 12 | 63 | 53 | 10 | 60 |
| 6 | Bournemouth | 38 | 13 | 18 | 7 | 58 | 54 | 4 | 57 |
| 7 | Sunderland | 38 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 42 | 48 | -6 | 54 |
| 8 | Brighton | 38 | 14 | 11 | 13 | 52 | 46 | 6 | 53 |
| 9 | Brentford | 38 | 14 | 11 | 13 | 55 | 52 | 3 | 53 |
| 10 | Chelsea | 38 | 14 | 10 | 14 | 58 | 52 | 6 | 52 |
| 11 | Fulham | 38 | 15 | 7 | 16 | 47 | 51 | -4 | 52 |
| 12 | Newcastle | 38 | 14 | 7 | 17 | 53 | 55 | -2 | 49 |
| 13 | Everton | 38 | 13 | 10 | 15 | 47 | 50 | -3 | 49 |
| 14 | Leeds United | 38 | 11 | 14 | 13 | 49 | 56 | -7 | 47 |
| 15 | Crystal Palace | 38 | 11 | 12 | 15 | 41 | 51 | -10 | 45 |
| 16 | N. Forest | 38 | 11 | 11 | 16 | 48 | 51 | -3 | 44 |
| 17 | Tottenham | 38 | 10 | 11 | 17 | 48 | 57 | -9 | 41 |
| 18 | West Ham | 38 | 10 | 9 | 19 | 46 | 65 | -19 | 39 |
| 19 | Burnley | 38 | 4 | 10 | 24 | 38 | 75 | -37 | 22 |
| 20 | Wolves | 38 | 3 | 11 | 24 | 27 | 68 | -41 | 20 |

**Italian Serie A Standings**

| # | Team | GP | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | PTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | Inter Milan | 38 | 27 | 6 | 5 | 89 | 35 | 54 | 87 |
| 2 | Napoli | 38 | 23 | 7 | 8 | 58 | 36 | 22 | 76 |
| 3 | Roma | 38 | 23 | 4 | 11 | 59 | 31 | 28 | 73 |
| 4 | Como | 38 | 20 | 11 | 7 | 65 | 29 | 36 | 71 |
| 5 | AC Milan | 38 | 20 | 10 | 8 | 53 | 35 | 18 | 70 |
| 6 | Juventus | 38 | 19 | 12 | 7 | 61 | 34 | 27 | 69 |
| 7 | Atalanta | 38 | 15 | 14 | 9 | 51 | 36 | 15 | 59 |
| 8 | Bologna | 38 | 16 | 8 | 14 | 49 | 46 | 3 | 56 |
| 9 | Lazio | 38 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 41 | 40 | 1 | 54 |
| 10 | Udinese | 38 | 14 | 8 | 16 | 45 | 48 | -3 | 50 |
| 11 | Sassuolo | 38 | 14 | 7 | 17 | 46 | 50 | -4 | 49 |
| 12 | Torino | 38 | 12 | 9 | 17 | 44 | 63 | -19 | 45 |
| 13 | Parma | 38 | 11 | 12 | 15 | 28 | 46 | -18 | 45 |
| 14 | Cagliari | 38 | 11 | 10 | 17 | 40 | 53 | -13 | 43 |
| 15 | Fiorentina | 38 | 9 | 15 | 14 | 41 | 50 | -9 | 42 |
| 16 | Genoa | 38 | 10 | 11 | 17 | 41 | 51 | -10 | 41 |
| 17 | Lecce | 38 | 10 | 8 | 20 | 28 | 50 | -22 | 38 |
| 18 | Cremonese | 38 | 8 | 10 | 20 | 32 | 57 | -25 | 34 |
| 19 | Verona | 38 | 3 | 12 | 23 | 25 | 61 | -36 | 21 |
| 20 | Pisa | 38 | 2 | 12 | 24 | 26 | 71 | -45 | 18 |

**Spanish LaLiga Standings**

| # | Team | GP | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | PTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | Barcelona | 38 | 31 | 1 | 6 | 95 | 36 | 59 | 94 |
| 2 | Real Madrid | 38 | 27 | 5 | 6 | 77 | 35 | 42 | 86 |
| 3 | Villarreal | 38 | 22 | 6 | 10 | 72 | 46 | 26 | 72 |
| 4 | Atletico Madrid | 38 | 21 | 6 | 11 | 62 | 44 | 18 | 69 |
| 5 | Real Betis | 38 | 15 | 15 | 8 | 59 | 48 | 11 | 60 |
| 6 | Celta Vigo | 38 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 53 | 48 | 5 | 54 |
| 7 | Getafe | 38 | 15 | 6 | 17 | 32 | 38 | -6 | 51 |
| 8 | Rayo Vallecano | 38 | 12 | 14 | 12 | 41 | 44 | -3 | 50 |
| 9 | Valencia | 38 | 13 | 10 | 15 | 46 | 55 | -9 | 49 |
| 10 | Real Sociedad | 38 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 59 | 61 | -2 | 46 |
| 11 | Espanyol | 38 | 12 | 10 | 16 | 43 | 55 | -12 | 46 |
| 12 | Athletic Club | 38 | 13 | 6 | 19 | 43 | 58 | -15 | 45 |
| 13 | Sevilla | 38 | 12 | 7 | 19 | 46 | 60 | -14 | 43 |
| 14 | Alaves | 38 | 11 | 10 | 17 | 44 | 56 | -12 | 43 |
| 15 | Elche | 38 | 10 | 13 | 15 | 49 | 57 | -8 | 43 |
| 16 | Levante | 38 | 11 | 9 | 18 | 47 | 61 | -14 | 42 |
| 17 | Osasuna | 38 | 11 | 9 | 18 | 44 | 50 | -6 | 42 |
| 18 | Real Mallorca | 38 | 11 | 9 | 18 | 47 | 57 | -10 | 42 |
| 19 | Girona | 38 | 9 | 14 | 15 | 39 | 55 | -16 | 41 |
| 20 | Real Oviedo | 38 | 6 | 11 | 21 | 26 | 60 | -34 | 29 |

**German Bundesliga Standings**

| # | Team | GP | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | PTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | Bayern | 34 | 28 | 5 | 1 | 122 | 36 | 86 | 89 |
| 2 | Dortmund | 34 | 22 | 7 | 5 | 70 | 34 | 36 | 73 |
| 3 | RB Leipzig | 34 | 20 | 5 | 9 | 66 | 47 | 19 | 65 |
| 4 | Stuttgart | 34 | 18 | 8 | 8 | 71 | 49 | 22 | 62 |
| 5 | Hoffenheim | 34 | 18 | 7 | 9 | 65 | 52 | 13 | 61 |
| 6 | Leverkusen | 34 | 17 | 8 | 9 | 68 | 47 | 21 | 59 |
| 7 | SC Freiburg | 34 | 13 | 8 | 13 | 51 | 57 | -6 | 47 |
| 8 | E. Frankfurt | 34 | 11 | 11 | 12 | 61 | 65 | -4 | 44 |
| 9 | FC Augsburg | 34 | 12 | 7 | 15 | 45 | 61 | -16 | 43 |
| 10 | Mainz | 34 | 10 | 10 | 14 | 44 | 53 | -9 | 40 |
| 11 | Union Berlin | 34 | 10 | 9 | 15 | 44 | 58 | -14 | 39 |
| 12 | M'gladbach | 34 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 42 | 53 | -11 | 38 |
| 13 | Hamburg | 34 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 40 | 54 | -14 | 38 |
| 14 | Cologne | 34 | 7 | 11 | 16 | 49 | 63 | -14 | 32 |
| 15 | Werder | 34 | 8 | 8 | 18 | 37 | 60 | -23 | 32 |
| 16 | Wolfsburg | 34 | 7 | 8 | 19 | 45 | 69 | -24 | 29 |
| 17 | Heidenheim | 34 | 6 | 8 | 20 | 41 | 72 | -31 | 26 |
| 18 | St Pauli | 34 | 6 | 8 | 20 | 29 | 60 | -31 | 26 |

**Test Batting**

| # | Player | Rating | Career best |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Joe Root | 880 | 932 |
| 2 | Harry Brook | 857 | 898 |
| 3 | Travis Head | 853 | 884 |
| 4 | Steve Smith | 831 | 947 |
| 5 | Kane Williamson | 822 | 919 |
| 6 | Kamindu Mendis | 781 | 784 |
| 7 | Temba Bavuma | 775 | 806 |
| 8 | Yashasvi Jaiswal | 750 | 858 |
| 9 | Shubman Gill | 730 | 807 |
| 10 | Dinesh Chandimal | 717 | 755 |

**Test Bowling**

| # | Player | Rating | Career best |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jasprit Bumrah | 879 | 908 |
| 2 | Mitchell Starc | 838 | 852 |
| 3 | Matt Henry | 836 | 853 |
| 4 | Pat Cummins | 832 | 914 |
| 5 | Marco Jansen | 825 | 825 |
| 6 | Scott Boland | 820 | 820 |
| 7 | Noman Ali | 817 | 853 |
| 8 | Kagiso Rabada | 807 | 902 |
| 9 | Josh Hazlewood | 775 | 864 |
| 10 | Nathan Lyon | 753 | 812 |

**ODI Batting**

| # | Player | Rating | Career best |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Daryl Mitchell | 815 | 840 |
| 2 | Virat Kohli | 791 | 908 |
| 3 | Ibrahim Zadran | 756 | 756 |
| 4 | Rohit Sharma | 748 | 879 |
| 5 | Shubman Gill | 716 | 841 |
| 6 | Babar Azam | 684 | 894 |
| 7 | Shai Hope | 679 | 782 |
| 7 | Harry Tector | 679 | 730 |
| 9 | K.L. Rahul | 664 | 676 |
| 9 | Salman Agha | 664 | 664 |

**ODI Bowling**

| # | Player | Rating | Career best |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rashid Khan | 705 | 775 |
| 2 | Jofra Archer | 649 | 682 |
| 3 | Keshav Maharaj | 645 | 737 |
| 4 | Adil Rashid | 629 | 671 |
| 5 | Josh Hazlewood | 626 | 725 |
| 6 | Maheesh Theekshana | 624 | 680 |
| 6 | Kuldeep Yadav | 624 | 757 |
| 8 | Mehidy Hasan | 621 | 722 |
| 9 | Mitchell Santner | 599 | 656 |
| 9 | Adam Zampa | 599 | 696 |

**T20I Batting**

| # | Player | Rating | Career best |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Abhishek Sharma | 875 | 931 |
| 2 | Ishan Kishan | 871 | 871 |
| 3 | Sahibzada Farhan | 848 | 848 |
| 4 | Phil Salt | 792 | 881 |
| 5 | Pathum Nissanka | 766 | 796 |
| 6 | Tilak Varma | 742 | 845 |
| 7 | Suryakumar Yadav | 722 | 912 |
| 8 | Jos Buttler | 716 | 794 |
| 9 | Dewald Brevis | 702 | 738 |
| 10 | Brian Bennett | 701 | 708 |

**T20I Bowling**

| # | Player | Rating | Career best |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rashid Khan | 753 | 828 |
| 2 | Varun Chakaravarthy | 740 | 818 |
| 3 | Abrar Ahmed | 736 | 757 |
| 4 | Adil Rashid | 721 | 747 |
| 5 | Jasprit Bumrah | 702 | 783 |
| 6 | Adam Zampa | 682 | 746 |
| 7 | Corbin Bosch | 669 | 745 |
| 8 | Matthew Forde | 667 | 679 |
| 9 | Mujeeb Ur Rahman | 663 | 757 |
| 10 | Nathan Ellis | 661 | 678 |

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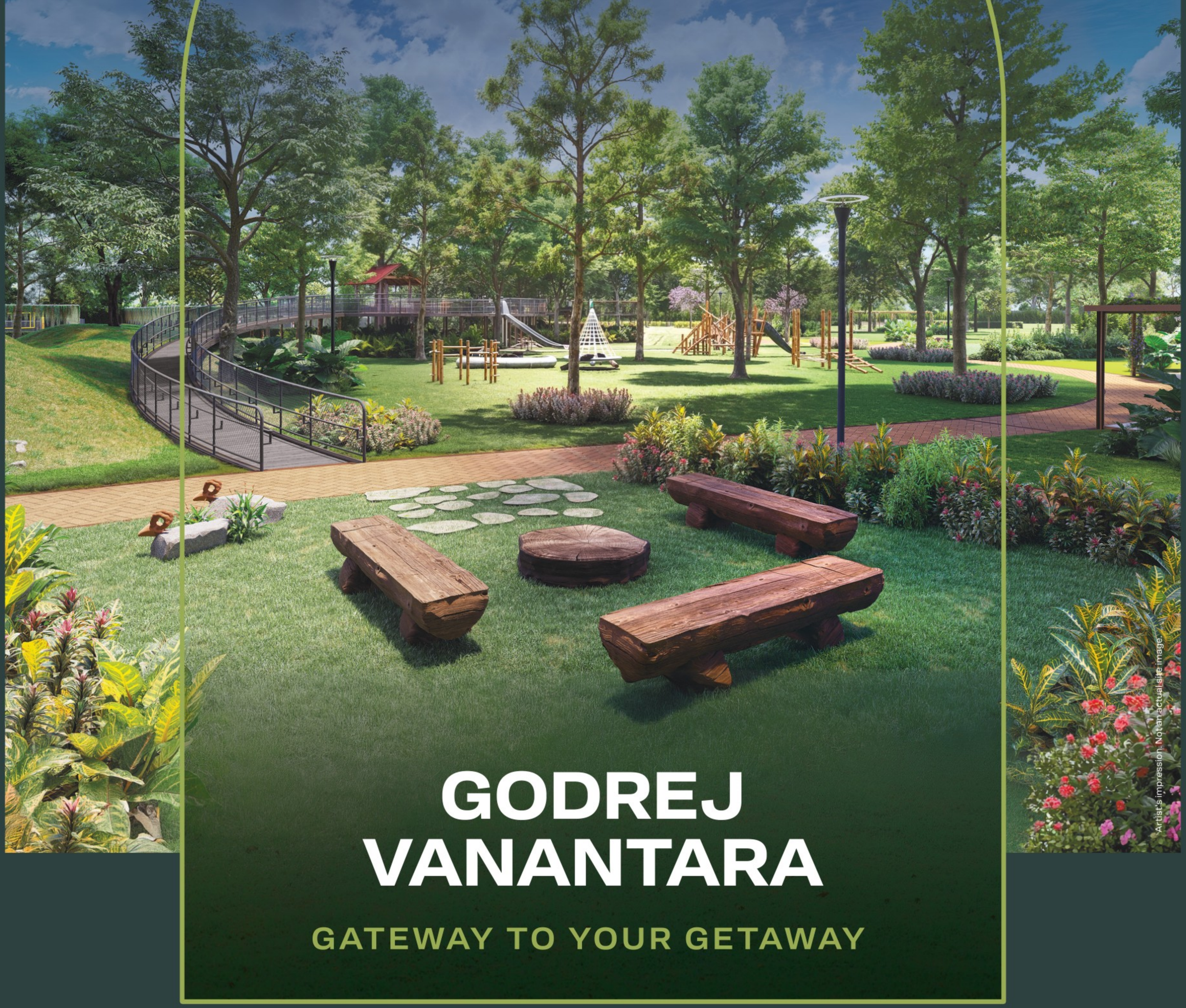

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# UTTAR PRADESH

## Powering India's Next Era of Technology, AI & Innovation

Navnirman Ke Varsh

From semiconductors and artificial intelligence to digital governance and advanced manufacturing, Uttar Pradesh is creating an integrated technology landscape that accelerates investment, innovation, employment and inclusive growth.

### Innovation-led Growth

From startups and semiconductors to AI, robotics, data centres and digital governance, Uttar Pradesh is rapidly building the technological foundation for a $1 trillion economy.

The state is emerging as a major hub for technology-driven growth and innovation.

**STARTUP ECOSYSTEM SNAPSHOT**

- **21,000+** Startups recognised
- **50%** Women-Led Startups
- **76** Incubators Operational
- **8** Unicorns Startups

### Technology-Enabled Governance

24+ citizen services, including income, caste and domicile certificates, are available through the e-Sathi mobile app.

Optical fibre connectivity has been extended to 2,066 Gram Panchayats.

Project Ganga aims to provide high-speed broadband connectivity to 20 lakh rural and semi-urban households.

### AI-connected, future-ready Uttar Pradesh

- AI & Innovation
- Semiconductors
- Data Centres
- Digital Connectivity
- Advanced Manufacturing

### Emerging Regional Technology Hubs

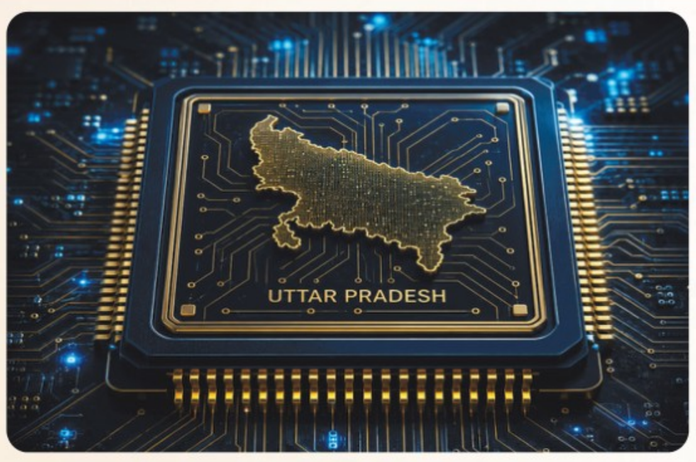
**India's Next IT & Electronics Hub**

**Advancing India's Drone Manufacturing Ecosystem**

KANPUR

**Building an AI-led Governance & Innovation Ecosystem**

LUCKNOW




### North India's First Semiconductor Unit

- North India's first semiconductor unit is being established in the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) region.
- ₹3,700 crore investment through the HCL-Foxconn partnership
- India's first display driver IC-based OSAT facility.
- Uttar Pradesh is among the fourth state in the country to introduce the Semiconductor Policy-2024.

**COMPLETE SEMICONDUCTOR & ELECTRONICS ECOSYSTEM**

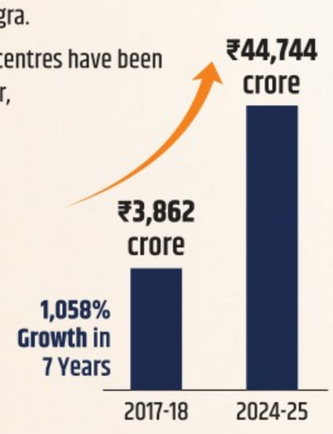
- **PACKAGING** → Advanced packaging solutions for high performance.
- **TESTING** → Precision testing for reliability, quality and global standards.
- **ASSEMBLY** → State-of-the-art assembly for precision and efficiency.
- **ELECTRONICS SUPPLY CHAIN** Integrated supply chain ensuring availability, resilience and growth.

CM Yogi Adityanath with Rajiv Kumar, MD & President, Microsoft IDC, at the groundbreaking ceremony of Microsoft IDC's Noida campus in Uttar Pradesh.

### Uttar Pradesh: India's Next IT & Electronics Growth Hub

- Till 2017, Uttar Pradesh had 4 STPI centres located in Noida, Lucknow, Kanpur, and Prayagraj.
- After 2017, 2 new STPI centres were established in the state at Meerut and Agra.
- Three additional STPI centres have been proposed in Gorakhpur, Bareilly and Varanasi.

Electronics exports from the state have risen significantly, from ₹3,862 crore in 2017-18 to ₹44,744 crore in 2024–25.




### State Transformation Commission

**EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING for a Viksit Uttar Pradesh**

- **VISION & STRATEGY** Setting long-term vision, priorities and measurable goals for inclusive growth.
- **ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION** Driving investments, job creation sectoral competitiveness.
- **INNOVATION & FUTURE READINESS** Promoting innovation, emerging technologies and sustainable solutions.
- **STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION** Engaging Govt., industry, academia and citizens for shared progress.
- **MONITORING & EVALUATION** Tracking progress through data, analytics and independent evaluation.
- **EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION** Ensuring convergence, accountability and timely execution of initiatives.

**DRIVING LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT**

### Data Centre & AI Infrastructure

Uttar Pradesh is rapidly emerging as a major data centre destination, supported by policy incentives, large-scale investments and expanding digital infrastructure.

CAPACITY ROADMAP

2030 — 5 GW TARGET CAPACITY → 2047 — 40 GW TARGET CAPACITY

- **8** Data Centre Parks
- **₹30,000 cr.** Investment
- **900 MW** Planned Capacity

- Letters of Comfort have been issued to 6 Data Centre Parks & 2 Data Centre Units
- A decision has also been taken to promote cluster and township models for data centres.

### Empowering Youth Through Digital Entrepreneurship

#### Chief Minister Digital Entrepreneur Scheme

- A plan has been launched to develop digital entrepreneurs in every Nyaya Panchayat across Uttar Pradesh.
- Selected youth will receive training, digital equipment and access to interest-free loans.
- Half the seats under the scheme are reserved for women.

TRAINING · EQUIPMENT · INTEREST-FREE LOANS · DIGITAL SERVICES

**EMPOWERING YOUTH • ENCOURAGING WOMEN • BUILDING DIGITAL UTTAR PRADESH**

### Building India's Next Robotics & AI Destination

#### Uttar Pradesh Robotics Mission

The Uttar Pradesh AI Mission has been launched to accelerate AI adoption across sectors.

#### AI Labs Across Educational Institutions

- In collaboration with the India's AI Mission, the process of establishing AI Labs in 49 ITIs across the state is underway.
- A Cyber Security Operations Centre is also being developed to strengthen digital security infrastructure.
- The "AI-Pragya Programme" has also been launched, under which global technology companies such as Microsoft, Google, Intel, and IBM are providing AI training to farmers, self-help groups, students, doctors, and government officials/employees.

## Driving Innovation, Infrastructure & Inclusive Growth

From semiconductor manufacturing and artificial intelligence to startups, robotics, data centres, digital governance and rural connectivity, Uttar Pradesh is creating a future-ready ecosystem that is accelerating investment, empowering citizens, generating employment and building the technological foundation for a $1 trillion economy.

## UTTAR PRADESH: Driving India's Next Era of Innovation, Technology & Inclusive Growth

M BG-BGE

# I would like an Indian chess championship with big money and all the top players

Aravindh Chithambaram has overcome a period of stagnation to show why some experts think he is one of India's finest chess talents ever. The 26-year-old talks about his journey as a professional, his astonishing arrival among the elites at 14, his experience with Esports, Gukesh and Vaishali's chances in their World title matches, and his dream National tournament

GETTY IMAGES

INTERVIEW

**Aravindh Chithambaram**

**P.K. Ajith Kumar**

Aravindh Chithambaram is rated by India's most successful chess coach R.B. Ramesh as the country's most talented player since Viswanathan Anand. He began well enough, and came up with some incredible performances, but, later on, was overshadowed by a bunch of other Indian prodigies that took world chess by storm.

Over the last couple of years, Aravindh has finally shown what he is capable of: last year, he rose to World No. 11.

There is time still for the 26-year-old to do even better. Excerpts from an interview:

> Esports is a huge opportunity for all the professional players like me. Events like these [World Cup] are important for players who make a living out of chess

**You finished runner-up at the Prague Chess Festival earlier this year. You had won that event in 2025. That was one of the best performances of your career...**

The victory at Prague will remain super special for me. It was such a strong tournament, with players like Anish Giri, Vincent Keymer, Wei Yi and R. Praggnanandhaa.

There is this award for the best game in every round, and I wanted to get it even more than the victory. And I finally got the award for the best game of the tournament – for the one against Anish. I was close to winning the title at Prague this year, too. The standard of my chess was actually good this time as well.

**You recently became the first Indian to qualify for this year's Esports World Cup, to be held in Paris in August.**

Esports is a huge opportunity for all the professional players like me. Events like these are important for players who make a living out of chess. I am happy that chess is also now part of the Esports community. It is getting bigger and bigger, and it is nice to see that. Over the last two years, I have been trying to focus both on over-the-board tournaments and online events. And I am glad that I have been able to do it.

**Do you think chess could become even more mainstream by being part of Esports and could get new fans?**

Yes, a lot of people now recognise me because of S8UL Esports [the team he represents].

**The first turning point of your career was the Chennai Grandmaster Open tournament, which was held as a sidelight of the World Championship in 2013. You began as the 53rd seed but won the tournament ahead of 21 Grandmasters, at the age of 14.**

Yes, and I also secured my first Grandmaster norm, before making even a single IM norm.

**And your rating performance was 2728, while your Elo rating was 2335.**

Chennai has always been lucky for me, I feel. It was my first big tournament win. And you know, in 2024, I won the Chennai Grand Masters, which changed my life completely. I did not have any expectations. It was such a strong tournament with so many strong players. I only wanted not to finish last; that was the aim basically. But things turned out differently, you know, when I won my game against Arjun [Erigaisi]. Winning the tournament mattered a lot. Because my career had been a bit stagnant till that point.

**True. Expectations had been pretty high after you caught the attention of the chess world at a very young age. You had won the National Under-19 Championship when you were 12. Your coach Ramesh has said some big things about you.**

At some point, maybe I did not have any goals. And my mindset had changed a bit.

**How did you come out of that situation?**

I started doing things like putting in more effort than usual. I think that made a difference.

**How much of an influence has Ramesh been in your life? He is the one who took you to Chennai from Madurai.**

Yes, I moved to Chennai to get coached by him. He has been a huge support to me, not just in terms of chess. He was the one who got me sponsors that enabled me to play in tournaments abroad, and those events helped me secure my IM title. I remember him posting about me on Twitter and people from various countries contributed. He also got me a scholarship.

> Gukesh is going through a tough time. But everyone could go through such a phase, and it is a matter of time before Gukesh gets his form back

**World title match against Ding Liren.**

Yes, that showed how such strong closed tournaments [instead of open events] could help the Indian players trying to break into the top tier of world chess. We need more tournaments like that, no doubt about it. That will be a big help for several players like me in India. I would also like to have an Indian championship with big prize money and all the top players taking part.

**Something like the US Championship?**

Yes. I would love to play in such a National Championship in India.

**And it would be great from the marketing point of view as well, a Nationals that will have all the best Indian players, including Gukesh, Arjun, Praggnanandhaa and Nihal Sarin. It would be a big opportunity for players like you, S.L. Narayanan, V. Pranav, Leon Mendonca...**

Indeed. With so many strong players in India, we should have a National Championship like that.

**At the Prague Festival this year, you defeated Gukesh, who hasn't been in great form for some time. Most people have now picked Javokhir Sindarov as the favourite in Gukesh's World title match later this year.**

I think we would see an equal fight in that match. Gukesh is going through a tough time. But everyone could go through such a phase, and it is a matter of time before Gukesh gets his form back. But it requires a lot of effort. And there is plenty of time for him to get back into shape. I am not surprised that Sindarov won the Candidates to earn the right to challenge Gukesh. He had a very good run at the World Cup in Goa [where he was the champion]. And he played exceptionally well in the Bundesliga, too.

**And it is not easy for Indian players to improve without support, as there are hardly any elite tournaments in India. The Chennai Grand Masters is an exception. And that tournament was organised as an opportunity for the likes of D. Gukesh and Arjun to fight for the last available slot in the 2024 Candidates. Gukesh went on to win at Chennai, then the Candidates and the**

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**And R. Vaishali will be playing the Women's World Championship match against Ju Wenjun of China.**

It would be an interesting challenge for Vaishali. She has the potential to win the World title.

This is her first World title match. She will need a different kind of mindset to play the World Championship match. I hope she manages to do that. It is great that an Indian is playing in both the World title matches.

## GAME THEORY

### The kings of the clay Major

Rafael Nadal's record of 14 French Open singles titles is unlikely to be surpassed anytime soon. With the clay Major in progress, we look at the most prolific male winners at the tournament in its various incarnations. From 1891 to 1924, the French Championships were open only to French nationals and French tennis club members. It became an international event in 1925 and moved to Stade Roland Garros in 1928. In 1968, it was the first Grand Slam to welcome non-amateur players, as the Open Era started.

Rafael Nadal

Max Decugis

Bjorn Borg

Henri Cochet

**MOST FRENCH SINGLES TITLES (MEN)**

| Player | Titles | Editions |
|---|---|---|
| Rafael Nadal | 14 | 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 |
| Max Decugis | 8 | 1903, 1904, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1912, 1913, 1914 |
| Bjorn Borg | 6 | 1974, 1975, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981 |
| Henri Cochet | 5 | 1922, 1926, 1928, 1930, 1932 |
| Andre Vacherot | 4 | 1894, 1895, 1896, 1901 |
| Paul Ayme | 4 | 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900 |
| Maurice Germot | 3 | 1905, 1906, 1910 |
| Rene Lacoste | 3 | 1925, 1927, 1929 |
| Mats Wilander | 3 | 1982, 1985, 1988 |
| Ivan Lendl | 3 | 1984, 1986, 1987 |
| Gustavo Kuerten | 3 | 1997, 2000, 2001 |
| Novak Djokovic | 3 | 2016, 2021, 2023 |
| Andre Gobert | 2 | 1911, 1920 |
| Jean Borotra | 2 | 1924, 1931 |
| Gottfried von Cramm | 2 | 1934, 1936 |
| Frank Parker | 2 | 1948, 1949 |
| Jaroslav Drobny | 2 | 1951, 1952 |
| Ken Rosewall | 2 | 1953, 1968 |
| Tony Trabert | 2 | 1954, 1955 |
| Nicola Pietrangeli | 2 | 1959, 1960 |
| Manuel Santana | 2 | 1961, 1964 |
| Rod Laver | 2 | 1962, 1969 |
| Roy Emerson | 2 | 1963, 1967 |
| Jan Kodes | 2 | 1970, 1971 |
| Jim Courier | 2 | 1991, 1992 |
| Sergi Bruguera | 2 | 1993, 1994 |
| Carlos Alcaraz | 2 | 2024, 2025 |

SOURCE: ROLAND-GARROS

## PICTURE THIS

GETTY IMAGES

### Making an entry

Interested in aura farming? Get yourself an entrance like Francis Ngannou's.

There's just something about arriving in style — and few do it better than sport's top stars.

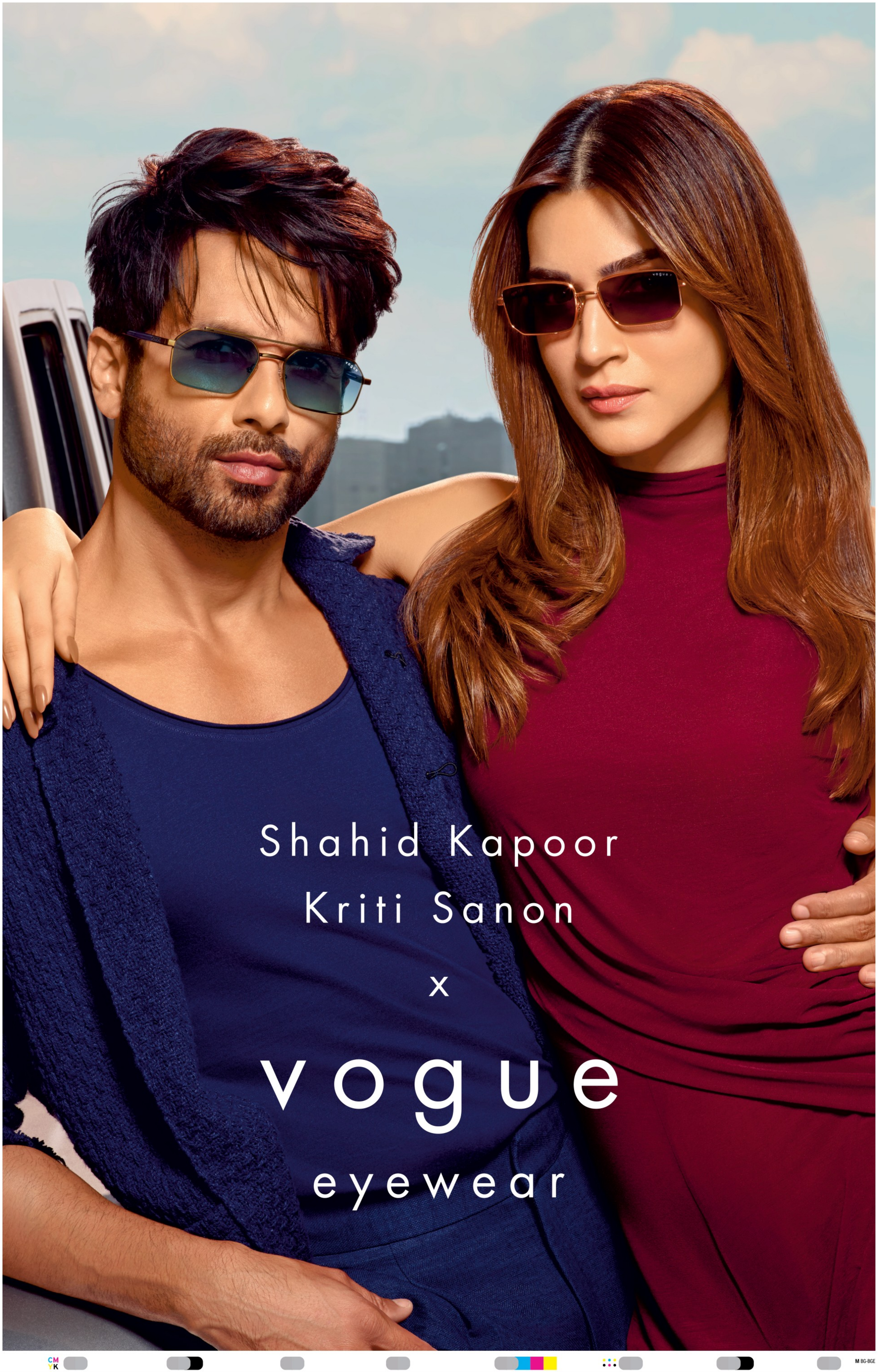
Perhaps the line of reasoning among competitive athletes is that you cannot control your exit — the jaws of defeat can snap shut anytime — so you may as well choreograph your entrance.

Combat sport and American franchise sport have popularised the entrance spectacle — music, pyrotechnics, strobe lights, cash drizzling down from the rafters, the works. Understandably, other disciplines have caught on, but the entrances of fighters just hit different.

This photograph of Ngannou's walk to the ring was taken before his heavyweight MMA bout against Philipe Lins during the main card of Netflix's Ronda Rousey vs. Gina Carano in California earlier this month.

In his prime, 'The Predator' Ngannou was widely viewed as the most devastating pure puncher in the UFC's heavyweight division.

And even walking out to Shakira's upbeat *Waka Waka*, as he did earlier in his career, didn't dilute the menace.


Shahid Kapoor
Kriti Sanon
x
vogue
eyewear

# B-SMILE bets on new tech for elevated corridors project, sets 18-month deadline

The Ultra High-Performance Fiber Reinforced Concrete, a sophasticated concrete mix, will be used to build the corridors

**Chetan B.C.**
BENGALURU

For what is being termed as the first time in Karnataka, Ultra High-Performance Fiber Reinforced Concrete (UHPFRC) technology will be used to construct elevated corridors, as B-SMILE gears up to implement its ambitious 11 elevated corridors project aimed at decongesting Bengaluru.

B.S. Prahallad, Technical Director of B-SMILE, told *The Hindu* that the UHPFRC technology was planned to ensure faster completion and improved quality and aesthetics.

"The UHPFRC, a sophisticated concrete mix, offers greater durability and does not require reinforcement bars, which are traditionally used. This concrete mix has the strength to withstand pressures of up to 150 MPa, while normal concrete mixes have only one-third of this strength," Mr. Prahallad explained. "It can also resist cracking under load much better than conventional concrete mixes," he added.

Officials say that the Ultra High-Performance Fiber Reinforced Concrete technology has been used in two or three other States, but this will be the first time it is being used in Karnataka. FILE PHOTO

With these qualities, the durability of the elevated corridors will increase significantly, according to Mr. Prahallad, who said it is two times higher than conventional structures.

Besides, the major thing about the UHPFRC is that the technology allows each span of the elevated corridors to be moulded up to 50 metres. "In the city, we have flyovers and metro structure spans that range from 20 to 25 metres and, in some cases, 30 metres. This will allow for a faster construction period and better aesthetics, as the spans will be longer," said a B-SMILE source.

The UHPFRC technology has been used in two or three other States, but this will be the first time it is being used in Karnataka, according to sources.

The B-SMILE has set a project deadline of 18 months for all the elevated corridors. The special purpose vehicle (SPV) has floated tenders for constructing eight flyovers and a grade separator, with the total civil construction cost estimated at ₹3,530.04 crore, while the total project cost, including land acquisition and other contingencies, is estimated at ₹4,755 crore.

These structures are part of the 11 elevated corridors that received Cabinet approval last month. However, this project has faced considerable backlash from activists for seeing elevated corridors as the solution for congestion over improving public transport.

**Accountability ensured**

Typically, the Bengaluru civic body offers a liability and maintenance period of three to five years depending on the nature of the project. However, for this project, the SPV has set a maintenance period of 10 years, marking a transition to stricter quality control standards.

Earlier, the B-SMILE had planned a 10-year maintenance period for the Outer Ring Road redevelopment project in east Bengaluru. However, considering the complexity involved in that particular stretch, the B-SMILE resorted to a three-year maintenance period. Therefore, the elevated corridors project will be the first in Bengaluru to mandate a 10-year maintenance period.

**2 flyovers to be tolled**

While all the nine corridors for which tenders have been called will be free for commuters to use, the B-SMILE has planned to toll two other elevated corridors approved by the Karnataka Cabinet. The stretches planned to be tolled are the 28-km corridor connecting Yeshwantpur and Old Madras Road and the 18.50-km stretch connecting Marenahalli Main Road (Ragigudda Junction) and Kanakapura Main Road.

These stretches will be tolled because the construction will be undertaken under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) with 40% Viability Gap Funding (VGF).

# Purple Line service to be suspended for two hours tomorrow

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has announced the suspension of Namma Metro services on a section of the Purple Line for two hours on Sunday, to facilitate essential maintenance works between Attiguppe and Vijayanagar stations.

According to a press release issued by the BMRCL on Friday, metro train services between Deepanjali Nagar and Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna (KSR) Metro Stations will remain suspended on Sunday from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.

**Maintenance activities**

The temporary curtailment is necessary to carry out maintenance activities on the affected stretch of the Purple Line. Despite the disruption on this section, metro services will continue to operate as per the regular timetable on other stretches of the network.

Trains will run between Challaghatta and Mysuru Road, Kempegowda (Majestic) and Whitefield (Kadugodi), Madavara and Silk Institute, and R.V. Road and Bommasandra from 7 a.m. onwards.

The BMRCL stated that normal services across the entire Purple Line, including the affected section between Deepanjali Nagar and KSR Metro stations, will resume from 9 a.m. the same day.

The BMRCL has advised commuters to take note of the temporary disruption and make alternative travel arrangements if required during the maintenance period.

# Rains force brief closure of Double Decker flyover

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

A section of the double-decker flyover connecting Ragigudda to HSR Layout in southeast Bengaluru witnessed flooding on Thursday night, leaving commuters stranded.

A Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) official told *The Hindu* that the situation was so severe that a few vehicles that entered the flooded stretch to avoid getting stranded stopped midway and failed to start again. This forced the BTP to barricade the up-ramp at Ragigudda, preventing vehicles from entering the flyover.

"It rained for almost 45 minutes after 7 p.m., and the flooding persisted till 9.30 p.m. Around 10 p.m., we reopened the flyover for operation," the officer said.

Sources noted that neither South Corporation officials nor the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited, which constructed the flyover, arrived at the spot, and the BTP ended up clearing the water.

The problem has once again underscored the coordination issues between departments, despite eight months having passed since the formation of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA). In this case, there is no clarity on whether the flyover maintenance has been handed over to the south corporation or if it still rests with the BMRCL.

In the aftermath of the flyover closure, parts of the BTM Layout witnessed traffic congestion. ALLEN EGENUSE J.

Now, the BTP has written to both the BMRCL and the south corporation to ensure that they clear water if flooding occurs again in the future. According to the source, the flooding was caused by a clogged rainwater pipeline.

In the aftermath of the flyover closure, parts of the BTM Layout witnessed traffic congestion. In addition to this, multiple flooding points were observed along Hosur Main Road, especially at Veerasandra Junction, Central Silk Board, and Bommanahalli. Several commuters took to the X, a microblogging platform, to share images and videos of the flooded stretches and pointed out the failure of the civic body to clear such spots.

The situation was no better on Friday, as the evening showers left multiple places flooded across the city. At least 30 flooding points had been identified by the BTP on Friday by 7.30 p.m. Major among them were Kumara Krupa Road, Queens Junction, SJP Road, Nayandahalli Junction, Balagere Road, and Siddapura Road, besides Sarakki Signal. Adding to the misery, two BMTC bus broke down

# Traffic diversion

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Temporary traffic diversions will be put in place at the trumpet road flyovers near the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru from May 30 to June 7 to carry out scheduled maintenance work.

The airport has issued a passenger advisory about the diversions, and asked people to watch for diversion signages while travelling to and from the KIA. As per the advisory, cars, two-wheelers and tempo travellers will be allowed on the flyover while heading from Bengaluru to the airport, and all four lanes will be open. However, buses, trucks, and construction vehicles will be diverted via the service lane.

# Two killed, 3 others injured after minibus rams two-wheelers

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Two persons were killed and three others were injured in an accident at Kadirenahalli in Banashankari on Thursday.

The deceased has been identified as Uday Kumar, 63, a resident of Kadirenahalli, and Selvakumar, 52, a resident of Dwarakanagar. The injured have been identified as Kumar, Vasanta and Ramamurthy.

A minibus carrying techies lost control near the Bendre Junction and rammed three scooters and two bikes at around 8.40 p.m. Uday Kumar and Selvakumar, riding separate two-wheelers, were killed on the spot.

Another motorcyclist, Kumar, and two pedestrians, Ramamurthy and Vasanta, were injured in the accident and were rushed to a hospital, where they are recovering.

The minibus driver abandoned the vehicle and fled from the scene.

Later, the Banashankari Traffic Police tracked down the driver, identified as Nagaraj, to his house in Laggere and arrested him. A probe is under way as to what had led to the accident, whether the driver was overspeeding or whether the vehicle had any technical fault.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Ministry of Finance, Department of Fiancial Services
**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, BENGALURU**
4th Floor, Telephone House ,Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore - 560001

(See Sec. 25 to 28 of the Recovery of Debt and Bankruptcy Act 1993 read II Scheduld to the Income Tax Act 1961).

**NOTICE FOR SETTLING A SALE PROCLAMATION**
**RC 158/2025 in OA No. 1453/2020**

**Between : Karnataka Grameena Bank,** (Erstwhile Karnataka Gramin Bank) Hesaraghatta Branch, Bengaluru District ...**Certificate Holder**
**And**
**Sri Udaya Kumar & Others** ...**Certificate Debtors**

**1. (CD-1) Sri Udaya Kumar** S/o. Sri Venkatachalapathy, Residing at : No. 292/1, 7th Main, Near Maramma Temple, Bagalagunte, Bengaluru - 560 073.
**2. (CD-2) Smt. Rathnamma** W/o. Sri Venkatachalapathy, Residing at : No. 292/1, Near Maramma Temple, Bagalagunte, Bengaluru - 560 073.
**3. (CD-3) Sri Muniraju N.,** S/o. Sri Nanjundappa M., No. 418/3, A Sector, Yelahanka New Town, Yelahanka, Bengaluru - 560 106.

Whereas in execution of certificate **RC No.158/2025 IN O.A. No: 1453/2020** issued by the Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal -1, Bangalore the undersigned has ordered the sale of the under mentioned properties.

**Whereas,** the above named Certificate Debtor were ordered by **RC No.158/2025** the debt amount of **Rs.36,99,495/-** (Rupees Thirty Six Lakhs Ninety Nine Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Five Only) along with interest and cost till realization is due from the certified debtors, namely, **Sri Udaya Kumar** and others the said certificate debtors have failed to pay the dues amount which they are laible to pay.

The outstanding liability in this matter as on **31.12.2025** is **Rs.59,40,446/-** (Rupees Fifty Nine Lakhs Forty Thousand Four Hundred Forty Six Only) and whereas the said has amount along with cost, expenses and future interest are not paid by you, the undersigned has ordered the sale of undermentoned immovable property.

You are hereby informed that the day on after 15th day from the date of service of this notice has been fixed for drawing up the proclamation of sale and settling the terms thereof. You are requested to bring to the notice of the undersigned any encumbrances, charges, claims or liabilities attaching to the said properties or any portion thereof.

**SCHEDULE PROPERTY**

**Mortgaged Immovable Property Standing in the name of Udaya Kumar & Rathanamma**

1. All that part and parcel of immovable property, Southern portion of Site No. 09, Old Khatha No. 8/313, New Khatha No. 1905, PID No. 150200201700402197 measuring East to West 30 ft and North to South 20 Ft. with ground +First Floor RCC building consisting of 1036 sq.ft. situated at Thotada Guddadahalli Village, Dasanapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, and bounded by : East by : 20 ft. Road, West by : Private Property, North by : Northern portion of Site No. 9, South by : Site No. 8.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on **04.03.2026**

**Sd/-** (P.H. Hemanth Kumar IRS) Recovery Officer-II
DRT - 1, Bengaluru

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Ministry of Finance, Department of Fiancial Services
**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -I, BENGALURU**
4th Floor, Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bengaluru - 560 001

**WARRANT OF ATTACHMENT OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

(See Sec.25 to 28 of the Recovery of Debt and Bankruptcy Act 1993 read with Rule 48 to 51 of the II Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 1961 )

**RC 158/2025 in OA No. 1453/2020**

**Between : Karnataka Grameena Bank,** (Erstwhile Karnataka Gramin Bank) Hesaraghatta Branch, Bengaluru District ...**Certificate Holder**
**And**
**Sri Udaya Kumar & Others** ...**Certificate Debtors**

**1. (CD-1) Sri Udaya Kumar** S/o. Sri Venkatachalapathy, Residing at : No. 292/1, 7th Main, Near Maramma Temple, Bagalagunte, Bengaluru - 560 073.
**2. (CD-2) Smt. Rathnamma** W/o. Sri Venkatachalapathy, Residing at : No. 292/1, Near Maramma Temple, Bagalagunte, Bengaluru - 560 073.
**3. (CD-3) Sri Muniraju N.,** S/o. Sri Nanjundappa M., No. 418/3, A Sector, Yelahanka New Town, Yelahanka, Bengaluru - 560 106.

**To, Branch Manager, Karnataka Grameena Bank,** Hesaraghatta Branch, Bengaluru District

**Whereas,** the above named Certificate Debtor were ordered by **RC No.158/2025** the debt amount of **Rs.36,99,495/-** (Rupees Thirty Six Lakhs Ninety Nine Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Five Only) along with interest and cost till realization is due from the certified debtors, namely, **Sri Udaya Kumar** and others the said certificate debtors have failed to pay the dues amount which they are laible to pay.

The outstanding liability in this matter as on **31.12.2025** is **Rs.59,40,446/-** (Rupees Fifty Nine Lakhs Forty Thousand Four Hundred Forty Six Only) and whereas the said has amount along with cost, expenses and future interest are not paid by you, the undersigned has ordered the sale of undermentoned immovable property.

Whereas since the above said dues have not been paid by the Certificate Debtors, this is to command you to attach the immovable property of the said Certificate Debtors as set forth in the Schedule hereunto annexed and unless the said certificate debtors shall pay to you the above said sum and the costs of this attachment, to hold the same until further orders from the Recovery Officer.

You are further commanded to return the Warrant on or before 07.04.2026 with an endorsement certifying the day on which and the manner in which it has been executed, or why it has not been executed.

**SCHEDULE PROPERTY**

**Mortgaged Immovable Property Standing in the name of Udaya Kumar & Rathanamma**

1. All that part and parcel of immovable property, Southern portion of Site No. 09, Old Khatha No. 8/313, New Khatha No. 1905, PID No. 150200201700402197 measuring East to West 30 ft and North to South 20 Ft. with ground +First Floor RCC building consisting of 1036 sq.ft. situated at Thotada Guddadahalli Village, Dasanapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, and bounded by : East by : 20 ft. Road, West by : Private Property, North by : Northern portion of Site No. 9, South by : Site No. 8.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on **04.03.2026**

**Sd/-** (P.H. Hemanth Kumar IRS) Recovery Officer-II
DRT - 1, Bengaluru

**CLARIFICATION OF NAME**

I, Srinivasalu.K. @ Seena S/o Kondappa R/at No.6, 1st Block, Old Savar Lane, Seshadripuram, Bengaluru - 560020 do hereby solemnly state that, my name is mentioned as **SRINIVASALU.K.** in my Aadhaar Card and Voter ID. But in my Pan card my name is mentioned as **SEENA.** I further state that above mentioned both the names belongs and refers to same person i.e., me only vide affidavit dated 26.05.2026 sworn to Notary.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, Manasa B.N. D/o Late B.K. Nagaraja R/at No.5/29, 2nd Main, Byatarayanapura, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560026 do hereby solemnly state that both names i.e., **MANASA GURUPRASAD** and **MANASA B.N.** belongs to and refers to same person i.e., me only. I further state that I will be continuing as **MANASA B.N.** for all future purpose vide affidavit dated 29,05.2026 sworn to Notary Deepa M.

**SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY**
**PUBLIC NOTICE**

After completion of New line works in Pavagada - Doddahalli (Tumakuru District of Karnataka) section of Tumakuru - Rayadurga New Line, a speed trials will be conducted by South Western Railway **from 27.05.2026.** Further, as part of statutory inspection by Commissioner of Railway Safety, Southern Circle, a Speed trial by Special Train will be conducted in the section on **30.05.2026** and during the speed trial, trains will run at a speed in excess of **120 km/h** on the newly laid New Railway line and subsequently regular train services will be introduced on this Railway line. Public are hereby advised to be cautious and not to trespass the Railway line, which will endanger the lives. Trespassers are also liable for prosecution, which may please be noted.

**Chief Administrative Officer/Construction**
**Bengaluru Cantonment**
PUB/164/AAS/PRB/SWR/2026-27

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South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY @SWRAILWAYHQ @sw_railways

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

General public are hereby informed that, my clients are intending to purchase the schedule properties from its rightful owners **1. Sri. Madhusudhan B.R,** aged about 48 years, S/o Sri. B N Ramamurthy, **2. Smt. Parimala. M,** W/o Sri. Madhusudhan B.R both are residing at No. 46/1, Bidaluru, Near Bidaluru Panchayath Office, Bengaluru Rural District, Karnataka - 562110, who claims to be the absolute owners in possession of the schedule property acquired under the registered sale deed, effect the katha in respect of the Schedule Property in the name of **1. Sri. Madhusudhan B.R,** S/o Sri. B.N Ramamurthy, **2. Smt. Parimala. M,** W/o Sri. Madhusudhan B.R. Accordingly they have constructed the residential building and they are in actual physical possession of the schedule property even to this day without any hindrance.

Any persons having any claims, right, title, interest, objections whatsoever either towards schedule properties or towards its transaction, then they can file their objections to the name and address shown below along with all necessary documents to the under mentioned within **15 days** from the date of this notice. Failing which, it is deemed that there is no objection whatsoever in dealing with the property.

**SCHEDULE PROPERTY**

All that piece and parcel of in respect of the immovable property Site No.: 114, BBMP Khata No.: 8533/9/114, Property ID: 3171640994, Ishika Nilaya situted at Sri Sai Layout Kattigenahalli Village, Ward No. 5, Jala Hobli, Bengaluru North 560064 East to West: 45 Feet North to South: 30 Feet and bounded on **East by:** Road, **West by:** Site No. 115, **North by:** Road, **South by:** Site No.113

**N.D. Vinaya Kumar,** Advocate No.12-14, 1st Floor, Y.M. Gopallappa building, BB Road, Yelahanka, Bengaluru- 560 064. Ph: 9945171538/ 9483177311. Date: 29-05-2026.

**SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY**
**E-TENDER NOTICE No. 13/SBC/26 of 20.05.2026**

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

| Sl. | Name of the Work | Approx. Value |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Divisional Engineer/South/Bengaluru sec : Proposed construction of PF 2 and 3 (Precast wall) for a length of 560 mtrs and 10.50 mtrs width and platform shelters (10.67 mtr width) at Shantigrama (SIGA) in Chikka Banavara (BAW) – Hassan (HAS) section, under Assistant Divisional Engineer/Kunigal subdivision. Maintenance period is 6 months | Rs. 2,94,80,766/- |
| 2 | Divisional Engineer/South/Bengaluru sec : Proposed Foot over Bridge (FOB) at Shantigrama (SIGA) station of Hassan (HAS) – Bengaluru (SBC) section under Assistant Divisional Engineer/Kunigal subdivision. Maintenance period is 12 months | Rs. 2,53,21,467/- |
| 3 | Divisional Engineer/South/Bengaluru Section: **Sub Work-I :** Bengaluru (SBC) - Salem (SA) Section: Proposed provision of tactile tiles (Divyang facilities) at Karmelaram (CRLM), Banaswadi (BAND), Hebbal (HEB), Heelalige (HLE), Kelamangalam (KMLM), Karuvalli (KVLR), Marandahalli (MZU), Palakkodu (PCV), Periya Naga Thunai (PRNT), Rayakkottai (RYC), Sivadi (SZV), Toppur (TPP), Muttampatti (MPC) and Semmandappatti (SMDT) (Total 14 stations), under Assistant Divisional Engineer/Dharmapuri subdivision. **Sub Work-II:** Proposed improvements to tactile path way (Divyang facilities) at Channarayapatna (CNPA), Kunigal (KIGL), B.G. Nagar (BGNR), D Samudhravalli (DSVS), Hirisave (HISE), Nelamangala (NMGA), Shantigrama (SIGA), Solur (SOLR), Thippasandra (TASA) and Yediyuru (YY) Stations, under Assistant Divisional Engineer/Kunigal subdivision. Maintenance period is 6 months | Rs. 1,83,03,216/- |
| 4 | Divisional Engineer/South/Bengaluru sec : Salem (SA) - Bengaluru (SBC) section : Proposed construction of RUB in lieu of LC No. 58 at km 85/800-900 by RCC box between Dharmapuri (DPJ) - Palakkodu (PCV) stations in Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Dharmapuri (DPJ) sub-division. RCC box size is 1 x 7.0 x 4.50 m (Barrel length = 13.7m) by rolling/launching method in Assistant Divisional Engineer /Dharmapuri sub-division. Maintenance period is 4 years | Rs. 6,62,78,820/- |
| 5 | Divisional Engineer/South/Bengaluru sec : Salem (SA) - Bengaluru (SBC) section : Proposed construction of RUB in lieu of LC No. 48 at km 73/900-74/000 by RCC box between Dharmapuri (DPJ) - Palakkodu (PCV) stations in Assistant Divisional Engineer/Dharmapuri sub-division. RCC Box of size 1 x 7.0 x 4.50m (Barrel length = 13.7m) by rolling/launching method in Assistant Divisional Engineer/Dharmapuri sub-division. Maintenance period is 4 years | Rs. 7,75,19,135/- |

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs on 15-06-2026**
**For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in**

PUB/167/AAS/PRB/SWR/2026-27 **Senior Divisional Engineer/Co-ordination, Bengaluru**

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**PERSONAL**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

**I, POOJA** Ganjewar, R/o No.318, Sri Nivasa, 3rd Floor, 11th Main, 6th Cross Road, RBI Layout, J P Nagar 7th Phase, Bangalore-560078, have changed my name to Pooja Anil Ganjewar vide affidavit dated 21-05-2026 sworn before Notary Mamatha.N.K, Bengaluru.

**I, KRITHIKA** S, D/o Shivakumar & Vijayalakshmi, R/a No.7.23, Veda Nilayam, 3rd Cross, Hennur Main Road, Bengaluru-560084 have changed my name to Iqra Irfan vide affidavit dt: 29.05.2026 sworn before Notary Meer Hassan, B'lore.

**PERSONAL**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

**I, T.Shashi** Rekha, W/o.Vishwanathan P, r/at No.2/A, Near Balaji Theatre, Nanjappa Garden, Viveknagar Post, Shanthinagar, Bangalore 560047 have changed my name as Shashi Rekha V vide affidavit dtd 27.05.2026 sworn before Y R Chandrasekhar, Bluru

**I, SHAFIULLAH** Noorullah Amanullah, R/o No 208, 4th Main Road, 1st Stage, 1st Block, HBR Layout, Benglauru-560043 have changed my name to Shafiullah Amanullah Noorullah vide affidavit dt: 26.05.2026 sworn before Notary C.Sharada, B'lore

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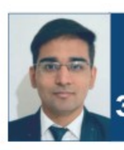

Harsh Nehera AIR 74 303/500

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# Liquor buyers allege overcharging despite State govt.'s price cut

A new excise duty regime was introduced on May 11, under which alcohol is taxed based on Alcohol in Beverage content rather than category

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Despite the Karnataka government reducing the prices of several premium liquor and beer brands under its revamped excise policy, many consumers in Bengaluru allege that bars, pubs and MRP liquor outlets continue to charge the old, higher rates.

The State government introduced a new excise duty regime on May 11, under which alcohol is taxed based on Alcohol in Beverage (AIB) content rather than category. The move, announced by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the 2026-27 State Budget, makes Karnataka the first State in India to levy excise duty based on alcohol content.

The move, announced by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the 2026-27 State Budget, makes Karnataka the first State in India to levy excise duty based on alcohol content. FILE PHOTO

**Fall in prices**

While beverages with higher alcohol content have become more expensive, prices of several premium beers and liquor brands have reportedly fallen by up to 25%. However, customers claim that the benefits of the price reduction are not reaching consumers.

Manoj Kumar, a resident of Nagarbhavi, said that several liquor shops near his house continue to charge the old rates despite the government's revision.

"The prices of many beer brands have come down by anywhere between ₹10 per bottle. However, several MRP outlets and bars are still collecting the amount printed on the old labels. Customers are not getting the benefit of the reduced prices announced by the government," he alleged. Prakash M., a resident of J.P. Nagar, said that the retailers often cite outdated bottle labels as justification for charging higher rates.

"When I questioned the staff at a liquor outlet about why they were charging the old price despite reports of reductions, they said the revised prices would apply only to bottles carrying updated labels. Most customers do not know the latest government-approved rates, making it difficult to challenge such claims. The absence of clear information at outlets creates confusion and leaves consumers with little option but to pay the amount demanded," he said.

A liquor shop owner, who requested anonymity, maintained that his outlet was following the revised pricing norms. However, he acknowledged that some outlets may still be selling products at older rates.

**Older stock**

"Most retailers are complying with the government's directions and passing on the reduced prices to customers. However, some liquor shops, bars and pubs may still be charging based on older stock purchased before the revision. Once such inventory is exhausted and fresh consignments arrive, pricing is expected to become more uniform," he said.

Responding to the complaints, the Excise Department officials said that all officers have been instructed to conduct surprise inspections across the State.

"We have directed officials to carry out checks and ensure that retailers adhere to the revised pricing structure. Appropriate action will be taken wherever violations are found," a senior Excise Department official said.

# KSPCA member seeks action against 'nail mafia' in city

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Karnataka State Police Complaints Authority (KSPCA) member Mohan Kumar Danappa on Friday wrote to the Bengaluru City Police Commissioner, urging strict action against miscreants allegedly placing iron nails on public roads to damage vehicles and extort money from motorists.

In his letter, Mr. Danappa stated that Bengaluru, being one of the most densely populated cities in the State, witnesses lakhs of vehicles plying on roads. However, anti-social elements are allegedly taking advantage of the situation by scattering iron nails on busy roads, flyovers, underpasses and other high-traffic areas to intentionally puncture tyres.

According to the complaint, motorists are then forced to visit nearby puncture repair shops, where they are allegedly charged exorbitant amounts for repairs. Mr. Danappa warned that such acts not only amount to cheating and public harassment but also pose a serious threat to road safety, increasing the risk of accidents.

The letter further highlighted the danger posed to emergency vehicles such as ambulances, fire service vehicles and police patrol vehicles. Delays caused due to punctures could result in loss of lives and affect disaster and emergency response operations, he noted.

**'People raise concerns'**

Mr. Danappa also pointed out that citizens have repeatedly raised concerns over the issue on social media and through independent awareness campaigns, while several national media outlets have reported on the so-called "nail mafia".

Seeking immediate intervention, he urged the Police Commissioner to identify and take legal action against those involved in the unlawful act.

# Youth stabbed over road rage

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

A young working as a bike taxi rider was allegedly stabbed in a road rage incident in Bengaluru.

The victim, Aditya, is a first year pre-university student. On Thursday night, Aditya was riding a bike with his friend near a bar on the Global Village Road, R.R. Nagar, when two bike-borne men behind him picked a fight over Aditya not giving way.

The road rage incident soon escalated into a fist-fight and the other bike rider allegedly stabbed Aditya with a knife and fled from the scene.

The R.R. Nagar police have registered a case and have launched a probe.

# 52-year-old man dies in wall collapse

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

In a tragic turn of events, a 52-year-old man died after a compound wall collapsed on him following heavy rain in west Bengaluru's Vijayanagar on Friday, police said.

The deceased has been identified as Shivaboraiah, a resident of Attiguppe, who made a living by driving an autorickshaw. A preliminary probe revealed that Shivaboraiah had brought his mother and wife to the hospital, dropped them off at the entrance, and driven to the next lane to avoid a traffic pile-up. A senior police officer told *The Hindu* that the wall of the Vijayanagar Club collapsed directly onto the autorickshaw in which Shivaboraiah was sitting. Passers-by noticed the incident and rushed to his rescue, but the debris had killed Shivaboraiah on the spot.

"The wall was located right next to a swimming pool, and the rain appears to have weakened the structure, which seems to be the primary reason. However, only a detailed probe can reveal the exact cause," he said.

The Vijayanagar police have taken up a complaint.

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| 3. | **Executive** (Academics) | Mumbai | 03 | Level 8 (47600-151100) | 11.54 | 35 years |

For further details viz. qualification, experience, procedure for submission of application etc., please visit website **www.icsi.edu/careers** and from **30.05.2026**. Interested candidates may **apply only through electronic mode (Online)**. Last date for submission of application (Online) is **19.06.2026.** Reservation policy will be applicable as adopted by the "ICSI" in its Service Rules. The "ICSI" reserves the right to increase/decrease or even not to fill up any posts as per its requirement.

www.icsi.edu/careers

ICSI House, 22, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi–110003
Phone : 011-45341036/92 email : hr.dept@icsi.edu Website : www.icsi.edu

Om Shri Manjunathaya Namaha
SIRI

Grand Inauguration of
MATHRUSHREE
INDUSTRIAL PARK
BELTHANGADY

Date : 31st May 2026, Sunday Time : 10.00 A.M.
Venue : Amruthavarshini Sabhabhavana, Dharmasthala

Inauguration by
Sri C.P. Radhakrishnan
Hon'ble Vice-President of India

In the presence of
Sri Thawar Chand Gehlot
Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka

Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade
Dharmadhikari, Shri Kshetra Dharmasthala
President, Sri Dharmasthala
Siri Gramodyoga Samsthe (R.)

Guests of Honour

Sri Dinesh Gundu Rao
Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare and District In-charge Minister, Dakshina Kannada

Captain Brijesh Chowta
Member of Parliament, Dakshina Kannada

Sri Harish Poonja
Member of Legislative Assembly, Belthangady

Sri K. Prathapasimha Nayak
Member of Legislative Council

Smt. Hemavathi V. Heggade
Founder, SIRI & President, Jnanavikasa Women Empowerment Programme

Dr. K. S. Somashekhar
Secretary, Rajya Sabha

Sri D. Surendra Kumar
Vice-President, SDME Society

We cordially invite you to grace the occasion

Board of Directors, Board Members and SIRI Staff

K. N. Janardhana
Managing Director, SIRI

Note : We kindly request you to arrive half an hour early, reserve your seat and switch off your mobile phone.

# Two mountaineers from Karnataka scale Mount Everest

**Anahita Belwariar**
BENGALURU

Chinmayee Trishulamurthy and Santosh Devarajappa.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Battling freezing temperatures, winds powerful enough to sweep climbers off their feet, and one of the world's toughest terrains, Chinmayee Trishulamurthy and Santosh Devarajappa scaled Mount Everest at a height of 29,031 feet on May 12, 2026.

The mountaineers, who have climbed several peaks in Karnataka, including Kumaraparvata and Skandagiri Hills, took mountain climbing courses in the Himalayas. Their training regimen included running, weight training, and yoga.

The duo chose the southeast (South Col) route from Nepal for their expedition. Every day, they began the ascent between 11 p.m. and 12 a.m. Due to the harsh weather conditions during the day, they preferred to climb at night, and stopped between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. to rest.

The most dangerous part of their summit was at the Khumbu Glacier, an ice glacier they described 'as tall as a building'. But for Ms. Trishulamurthy, who was mesmerised by the glowing colours of the ice in the sunlight, it was also the favourite part.

Needless to say, there were darker moments too.

"One of our friends was injured as ice fell on him. Luckily, he was rescued, but that really made me question my journey ahead," Ms. Trishulamurthy recollected. For Mr. Devarajappa, it was his guide's advise to keep going with a neutral mind and emotions in check that came to his rescue in such tough situations.

Highlighting the role of Sherpas during the summit, he recollected how, when his oxygen level dropped to zero at an altitude of 8,800 m, his Sherpa carried him to the nearest oxygen centre, saving his life. Mr. Devarajappa encouraged more people to take up mountaineering, while both climbers advised aspiring Everest summiteers to undergo proper mountaineering training and climb peaks above 6,000 metres before attempting the Everest.

Though their summit was completed in 46 days, the preparation for it began years ago, pointed out Ms. Trishulamurthy and Mr. Devarajappa.

They cautioned young climbers against choosing the Everest as their first major summit, stressing that inexperience can endanger not only themselves, but everyone involved in the expedition.

# Students from Jharkhand shine in COMED-K taking five spots in top 10 ranks

There were no Karnataka candidates in the top 10, but the students were among the first 100 rank holders; COMED-K UGET is the gateway to around 25,000 seats in 125 private engineering colleges

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Darshil Modi

Priyanuj Bhagabati

Shrestha Gupta

Five spots in the top 10 ranks in COMED-K UGET-2026, an entrance test for undergraduate courses, were taken by students from Jharkhand. One student each from Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Bihar took the remaining spots in the top 10 ranks.

There were no Karnataka candidates in the top 10, but the students were among the first 100 rank holders.

The Consortium of Medical, Engineering and Dental Colleges of Karnataka (COMED-K) announced the COMED-K UGET results on Friday.

Darshil Modi from Jharkhand secured the first rank. The second rank was secured by Priyanuj Bhagabati from Jharkhand and the third by Shrestha Gupta from Uttarakhand.

The others in the top 10 are Arsh Parashar who got the fourth rank, followed by Ishanka Agarwal, Aneesh Shukla, all from Jharkhand, and Narendra Babu Gari Mahith from Andhra Pradesh, Drishti Sachdeo from Chhattisgarh, Manas Jindal from Punjab, and Aditya Kumar from Bihar. The results showed that 11,207 candidates are in 90th to100th percentile. Out of this, 3,496 candidates are from Karnataka. Similarly, 11,385 candidates are between the 80th and 90th percentile.

**This year too, the COMED-K counselling would be conducted online, and the candidates have to upload the scanned copies of the documents through their login**

Among this 3,207 candidates are from Karnataka. And, 10,940 candidates are between the 70th and 80th percentile, of which 3,111 candidates are from Karnataka. Rank cards of the eligible candidates will be generated and made available in their respective 'applicant login' on the COMEDK website (www.comedk.org).

The COMED-K UGET is the gateway to around 25,000 seats in 125 private engineering colleges. As against 1,30,620 candidates who applied seeking engineering seats, around 1,10,774 (36,954 Karnataka and 73,820 non-Karnataka) candidates wrote the test on May 9.

This year too, the COMED-K counselling would be conducted online, and the candidates have to upload the scanned copies of the documents through their login. These uploaded documents will be verified by the panel of expert verification officers.

**For regular updates**

The number of seats available, the quantum of tuition fees and counselling dates would be notified in due course. Also, a separate set of counselling process documents detailing the procedure for participating in the counselling would also be made available shortly, and the candidates are required to refer to the website regularly for all the updates, besides familiarising themselves with the seat selection process, a release noted.

## From Page One

### Shutters down on 458 UG programmes

The department also requested that the intake should be reduced for courses in which enrolment has been low for the last three years.

Meanwhile, admissions are being made in many government first-grade colleges in the State as per
the fixed intake and the principals of the colleges have requested permission to start new courses and for seat enhancement for some courses in demand. To introduce courses that are in line with industry demands and include apprenticeship in the learning process, permission was sought to start Apprentice Embedded Degree Programme (AEDP) skill-based courses in BCom in 45 colleges through Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) and BOAT (Board of Apprentice Training). The government has given permission to start 230 new courses related to BA, BSc and Bachelor of Social Work degrees. In 186 colleges, permission has been given to increase the intake for existing and high-demand courses from a minimum of five seats to a maximum of 100 seats.

As many as 26 colleges have been given permission to start new Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and Bachelor of Computer Application (BCA) courses, sanctioning intake from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 100 seats.

In addition, the government has issued an order allowing 63 colleges to start new AEDP courses with a total seating capacity of 60.

"For the last five years, our college has been offering optional English, Kannada, History, Botany and other subjects, with less than five enrolment. Therefore, a request was made to the government to close these traditional courses with less admission and allow AEDP courses to be started. The government has given permission for this," said the principal of a government first-grade college in Bengaluru.

# 'Flybrary' to come up at Mysuru airport

MYSURU: A 'Flybrary', which is expected to provide travellers access to a variety of books while waiting for their flights, is expected to come up at Mysuru airport.

It is aimed at promoting reading among air travellers.

# CII Karnataka announces strategic roadmap for financial year 2026-27

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

(Centre): Guruprasad Mudlapur, chairman, CII Karnataka State Council 2026-27, and president, Bosch Group India and managing director, Bosch Limited, during a media conference in Bengaluru on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Karnataka, on Friday announced its strategic roadmap for fiscal year 2026-27.

The trade body said that to accelerate competitiveness for its member companies, it would focus on five key pillars such as growth, resilience, inclusion, sustainability, and building trust.

Addressing a media conference here, Guruprasad Mudlapur, chairman, CII Karnataka State Council 2026-27 and president, Bosch Group India, and managing director, Bosch Limited, said, "Under the theme "Accelerating Karnataka's Competitiveness", the CII was focused on advancing the State's leadership in innovation, advanced manufacturing, and technology-led growth."

"Through our focused initiatives and programmes, we are driving policy advocacy, ease of doing business, and AI-led industrial transformation, while equipping industries, especially MSMEs, through our Centres of Excellence," he said.

Highlighting Karnataka's growth, he said, the State has been on a high-growth mode, recording 9.1% growth far ahead of the national average, and the CII Karnataka anticipating this pace to continue in the fiscal year 2027 as well.

Building on this momentum, the CII Karnataka would advance its agenda with a sharper focus on strengthening advocacy and ease of doing business, promoting inclusive and balanced growth beyond Bengaluru, and enhancing ecosystem competitiveness through capability building for Future Readiness, MSME, Family Business, Supply Chain, including AI transformation, Decarbonisation, Energy transition, and Water Stewardship, newly appointed representatives of the trade body said.

The CII Karnataka would also focus on learning and development, fostering strategic partnerships and collaborations, and supporting internationalisation initiatives to drive growth and expand market access, they added.

**Future ready**

The CII Karnataka representatives said the trade body's agenda would prioritise enhancing competitiveness, strengthening global integration, and accelerating the adoption of sustainability practices and digital transformation. Together, these initiatives would create a more resilient, inclusive, and future-ready industrial ecosystem in the State, they said.

Moreover, services of the CII's Centres of Excellence would be taken forward under cluster models in areas such as sustainability, energy transition, digital transformation, skilling, and MSME competitiveness, they said.

Sam Cherian, vice-chairman, CII Karnataka State Council 2026-27 & managing director, Schevaran Laboratories, a Mysore-based firm, said, "Karnataka stands at a pivotal moment in its growth journey, with significant potential to drive inclusive and regionally balanced development. At the CII Karnataka, our priority will be to accelerate the growth of tier-2 and tier 3 cities by strengthening local industrial ecosystems, fostering entrepreneurship, and enhancing infrastructure and market access."

The CII Karnataka was particularly focused on empowering MSMEs and family businesses through capability building, digital transformation, and sustainable practices, enabling them to scale and compete globally, Mr. Cherian said.

"At the CII, we remain committed to stronger industry-government collaboration and initiatives like Beyond Bengaluru, and are working toward supporting our members become resilient," he said.

# Young Josephites triumph in Finland

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Students of classes 10 and 12 from St. Joseph's School (CBSE), Bengaluru, won the "Future X Finland 2030: Innovating Today, Leading Tomorrow Programme", a Nordic pitch competition which was held in Finland recently.

The trip brought together students from ten schools for the competition, a platform where young minds present real start-up ideas to a live jury. St. Joseph's sent two teams and both returned with honours. The first team comprising Appachu Ganapathy, Pratham N. Srivastava, Mukul Chakravarthy, and Jaswanth Rajaram won first place for their start-up "BIOLOOP", which addresses animal waste management and recycling.

The second team of Preetham K.Gowda, Kushal Modi, Rohan Thakwani, Jai, and Jenelia Wilona Sequeira secured the runner-up position with "Aerobloom", an innovative concept designed to regulate oxygen levels in office spaces.

**Government of Karnataka**
**SUVARNA AROGYA SURAKSHA TRUST**
**(Department of Health & Family Welfare)**
Arogya Soudha, 7th Floor, Magadi Road, Bengaluru-560023.
Phone No: 080-22536200, E-mail: directorsast@gmail.com

No: SAST/ADM/TEND/1/2026-ADM(e-Office-321496) Date:27.05.2026

**TENDER NOTIFICATION**

**Sub: Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust invites tender for services of Chartered Accountant - reg.,**

Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Karnataka registered under the Indian Trust Act of 1882 is implementing various Government Health Schemes. For the Successful implementation of its Schemes, the Trust seeks to hire the services of Chartered Accountant for one year. Bids have to be submitted on the KPP Portal at https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home from 29.05.2026. The last date for submission of bids in the e-Procurement portal is on 12.06.2026 upto 5:30 pm.

Note approved by Executive Director

**Sd/- Director (Operations), Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust, Bengaluru**

DIPR/CP/883/CCL/2026-27

**IDBI BANK**
CIN : L65190MH2004GOI148838
**IDBI Bank Ltd, Retail Recovery Department,**
**3rd Floor, Sai Corporate Park, Rukanpura, Bailey Road, Patna – 800 014**

**Show Cause Notice**

**Shri. Vikash Srivastava, Smt. Vina Shrivastava & Shri. Akash Srivastava**
# 8, Flat no-401, Bannerghatta Road J.P Nagar, Banglore -560078
Bangaloan Lane, Nai Sadak chowk, Patna City, Pin no-800008

Notice is hereby given to the entities/persons mentioned below that the proceedings for identification of wilful Defaulters as laid down in RBI Master Direction on Treatment of wilful Defaulters and large Defaulters dated November 28, 2025 (RBI Master Direction), has been initiated and the Show Cause Notice (SCN) dated 22nd April, 2026 issued by IDBI Bank has been returned/unserved.

| Name & Address | Designation (Details as per SCN) | Criteria for Wilful Default |
|---|---|---|
| **Shri. Vikash Srivastava** S/o Arun Kumar Srivastava # 8, Flat no-401, Bannerghatta Road J.P Nagar, Banglore Pin no- 560078 | **Borrower** | **3(1) (xviii) (A) (a) 3(1) (xviii) (A) (D)** |
| **Smt. Vina Srivastava** W/o Shri. Arun Kumar Bangaloan Lane, Nai Sadak Chowk, Patna City, Pin no-800008 | **Co-Borrower** | **3(1) (xviii) (A) (a) 3(1) (xviii) (A) (D)** |
| **Shri. Akash Srivastava** S/o Arun Kumar Srivastava Bangaloan Gali, Nai Sadak Chowk, Patna City, Pin no-800008 | **Co-Borrower** | **3(1) (xviii) (A) (D)** |

The SCN can be obtained from the Bank IDBI Bank Ltd. Retail Recovery Department, 3rd Floor, Sai Corporate Park, Rukanpura, Bailey Road, Patna-800014,Bihar e-mail id:irfan.khan@idbi.co.in and preetam.anand@idbi.co.in, either in person or by duly authorized person by producing the proof of identity.
The above person(s), if they/he/she desire, may show cause within 21 days from the date of this notice as to why they/he/she should not be declared and reported to RBI as Wilful Defaulter.
In Case submission/representation against this SCN is not received within 21 days from the date of this publication, it will be presumed that they have nothing to submit and the IDBI Bank Ltd. may proceed further to classify them as Wilful Defaulter. Upon declaration as Wilful Defaulter, the Bank reserves the right to take actions against above noted person(s) as per RBI Master Directions and /or prevailing RBI Guidelines.

Yours faithfully,
**Shri Sanjay Kumar Mishra**
**Deputy General Manager**
**Retail Recovery Department**

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**e-mail-ids:directorbmcrcbellary@gmail.com, website : https://vims.karnataka.gov.in**

NO. BMCRC/GNL-3/Tender/2026-27/98 Date:27-05-2026

**e-TENDER NOTIFICATION**

The following works for the construction Civil Works as shown below at BMCRC, Ballari are invited under the K.T.P.P Act 1999-2000 on a two-bid system through e-procurement portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in of Government of Karnataka are invited. **DME/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT80** Approx. amount Rs.50.58Lakhs, **DME/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT81** Approx. amount Rs.39.39Lakhs, **DME/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT78** Approx. amount Rs.81.10Lakhs & **DME/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT79** Approx. amount Rs.81.26Lakhs Interested bidders are request to submit their bids on date:27.05.2026 to 11.06.2026 up to 5.00PM in the above portal. Further details may be obtained in the below said website and www.bmcrc.karnataka.gov.in.

**Sd/- Dean & Director, BMCRC, Ballari**
**DIPR/Ballari/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/186**

**BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION**
**Office of the Executive Engineer, Zone-1, Vidyaranyapura Division, No.582, 1st Main BEL Layout, 2nd Stage, Vidyaranyapura, Bengaluru - 560097.**

No: BNCC/EE/VDP-D/KPPP/02/2026-27 Date: 29-05-2026

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**
**(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)**

The Executive Engineer, Vidyaranyapura Division, Zone-1, BNCC, Bengaluru invites Tenders from eligible Contractors registered in BNCC or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the Construction of Work detailed below.

| Sl. No. | Name of the Work / Category |
|---|---|
| 1 | Annual Maintenance of SWD in Vidyaranyapura Division for the year 2026-27. **(Others) - Amount Put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs): 145.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 2,17,500/- (Rs. 1.00 Lakh through KPP Portal and Rs. 1.175 Lakh in the form of B.G)** |

**Calendar of Events: 1)** Tender Documents may be Downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 01-06-2026, 16.30 Hours onwards. 2)** Last Date for Receipt of Queries and Pre Bid Meeting on **03-06-2026 at 15.00 Hours. 3)** Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders: **11-06-2026 upto 16.00 Hours. 4)** Date and Time for Opening of Technical Bid: **12-06-2026 at 16.30 Hours. 5)** Date of Opening of Financial Bid: **Will be intimated to Bidders.** Further details can be had from the above office.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer**
**Vidyaranyapura Division, Zone-1,BNCC.**

## Six shot dead

**The Hindu Bureau**
BELAGAVI

Six persons were found dead in Govindpur village near Chadchan of Vijayapura district on Friday.

The names of the deceased were given as Chandu Nirale, Dundappa Nirale, Shivaputra Nirale, Rahul Nirale, Samarth Nirale and Shabbir Nadaf, all of Govindpur village.

Preliminary investigation has revealed that members of the Golagi family shot dead five members of the Nirale family and one of their associates.

**Timings**
**BENGALURU**

| | |
|---|---|
| **SATURDAY, MAY. 30** | |
| RISE | 05:53 SET 18:42 |
| RISE | 17:59 SET 04:44 |
| **SUNDAY, MAY. 31** | |
| RISE | 05:53 SET 18:42 |
| RISE | 18:51 SET 05:30 |
| **MONDAY, JUN. 01** | |
| RISE | 05:53 SET 18:43 |
| RISE | 19:44 SET 06:18 |

| Bengaluru Weather | max | min |
|---|---|---|
| Tumakuru | 34 | 15 |
| Mysuru | 33 | 22 |
| Bengaluru | 32 | 23 |

**Bengaluru Today**
**33°C** The weather will be warm. Spell of light rain and thundershower with gusty winds to occur. Night will be comfortable.

**Bengaluru Tomorrow**
**30°C** Morning will be pleasant. Day will be slight warm. Night also will be pleasant. Chances of moderate rain and thundershower.

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THE HINDU
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# How State's minimum wage hike debate goes beyond rising costs

Hotels, food processing units, construction firms and even apartment complexes are expected to feel the impact

**Rishita Khanna**
BENGALURU

Karnataka's recent notification on minimum wage revision is expected to send a ripple across sectors, with industries warning of higher costs not only for businesses, but for consumers. Labour representatives, however, argue that the long-term economic and social benefits outweigh the immediate burden.

Hotels, food processing units, construction firms and even apartment complexes are expected to feel the impact of the revised wages, with industries pointing out that the increased labour costs will inevitably be passed on to consumers.

### Hotel industry

The hotel industry, in particular, has warned of a sharp increase in food prices once the revised wages come into force. "The increase means at least ₹5,000 extra per worker every month compared to current salary levels. Most hotel workers are presently paid around ₹16,000 a month," said Roopa Shashtri, owner of a food chain in Gandhinagar. "If wages have to be raised, it will directly reflect in menu prices. Even a plate of idli that costs ₹40 today may have to be sold at ₹80," she said.

Construction companies said the impact will be substantial because labour forms a major share of overall project expenditure.

Contractors explain that the effect is not limited to unskilled workers alone. This, they say, will create a cascading increase in labour costs across an entire project. "The sector is already under pressure from rising prices of steel, cement, sand, fuel and transportation," said Sreedhar M.N., a construction contractor. "When labour costs are added on top of these existing increases, the overall cost of construction inevitably goes up." He pointed out that labour alone accounts for nearly 25% to 35% of total project expenditure.

### Apartment complexes

The impact is expected to extend beyond industries into residential communities as well. Apartment complexes and gated communities, which rely heavily on outsourced housekeeping staff, security guards and maintenance workers, are also likely to see an increase in monthly maintenance charges. "Once minimum wages are revised, agencies will increase their contract costs, and that additional burden ultimately gets passed on to residents," said Jayaprakash K. of the Panathur Apartment Complex Welfare Association.

While industries have largely focused on the State government's announcement of an "average 60% increase" in minimum wages, Satyanand Mukund, State secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), argued that the actual increase for the largest section of workers – unskilled labourers employed in hotels, shops and small establishments – is closer to 40% to 45%. "The present revision comes nearly nine years after the last major revision in 2016-17. Seen annually, the increase works out to less than 4% a year," he said.

### Economic survey

Citing the Karnataka Economic Survey 2021-22, Mr. Mukund said the State has a workforce of around 3.91 crore people, based on a worker population ratio of 58.2%.

Of this, around 51.5% are wage earners, salaried employees or casual labourers, amounting to nearly 2.02 crore workers dependent on wages for their livelihood. After excluding organised sector workers, the number of workers directly influenced by minimum wage revisions is estimated at around 1.77 crore.

He further explained on claims around wage hike leading to overall hike and said that wages are only one component of an industry's total expenditure. "Alongside labour costs, businesses also spend on rent, raw materials, electricity, machinery, transport and capital investment. The question is what proportion of the total cost is actually labour cost," he argued, saying that the increase is far less dramatic than it is being projected.

Labour rights group also contend that industries have effectively benefited from suppressed wage levels for years and are now reacting to a delayed correction.

### Long overdue

Human rights activist Vinay Sreenivas described the revision as long overdue, arguing that better wages could help break cycles of generational low-paid labour. "Many families continue in the same forms of daily wage work for generations because their incomes never allow them to move beyond survival. Better wages can gradually change that condition," he said, while stressing that remaining sectors should also be brought under stronger wage protection.

**New minimum wages for hotel industry**

| Category of worker – Zone 1 | Basic | Two years DA | Basic + DA |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unskilled | ₹ 23,376 | ₹ 1,030.8 | ₹ 24,407 |
| Semi-skilled | ₹ 25,714 | ₹ 1,030.8 | ₹ 26,744 |
| Skilled | ₹ 28,285 | ₹ 1,030.8 | ₹ 29,316 |
| Highly skilled | ₹ 31,114 | ₹ 1,030.8 | ₹ 32,144 |

NOTE: Minimum wages are categorised into three zones to adjust with the cost of living. Zone 1 indicates cost in Greater Bengaluru Authority and surrounding areas. It has the highest minimum wage rate in the State.

**Details of DA** (two years): 2025 ₹595; 2026 ₹436

The State has a workforce of around 3.91 crore based on a worker population ratio of 58.2%, according to State secretary of AITUC .

# High Court raps police for wrongfully charging man with abetment to suicide

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Terming as "recklessness and mechanical prosecution" the action of the police in wrongly invoking abetment to suicide provision of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against a man resulting in his wrongful incarceration in jail for the past six months, the High Court of Karnataka has ordered departmental inquiry against a police inspector, who had filed a charge-sheet against the man despite the victim, his wife, being alive.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order while also ordering immediate release of the 29-year-old man, a resident of Bengaluru, who had been booked by the Banaswadi police under Sections 108 (abetment to suicide), 62, 85 and 352 of the BNS, 2023.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed by petitioner's wife alleging prolonged domestic harassment and abuse. According to the complaint, a quarrel broke out on October 20, 2025, after the petitioner allegedly returned home intoxicated and assaulted her. Distressed by the incident, the wife attempted suicide by jumping from the second floor of their residence. She survived with injuries and later lodged a police complaint. "What shocks the judicial conscience is not merely the erroneous invocation of the provision, but the grave consequence that followed in its wake," the court observed.

The court noted that Section 108 applies only when "any person commits suicide", making the existence of an actual suicide a foundational requirement for prosecution. "There is no suicide in the case at hand. The wife who has survived an injury is now hale and healthy and is standing before this court," Justice Nagaprasanna remarked. Calling the prosecution a "glaring manifestation of non-application of mind", the court criticised the investigating officer for filing the charge-sheet "without even adverting to the elementary ingredients" of the offence and for depriving of his liberty under a legally unsustainable charge-sheet.

Meanwhile, the court quashed the criminal proceedings and the petitioner and his wife had amicably settled their matrimonial dispute and wished to resume their relationship.

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# Siddaramaiah has been a trenchant critic of Hindutva politics

**K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj**
BENGALURU

Outgoing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah

Moments after resigning as Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah declared he would remain in active politics and that he would fight communal forces till his last breath, in character with how he has sought to position himself in Karnataka's politics for two decades now.

Though he became Finance Minister and Deputy Chief Minister back in 1996, he inched closer to becoming Chief Minister in 2009 when he became Leader of Opposition to the first-ever BJP government in the State led by B.S. Yediyurappa. Since then, he has come to define the progressive pole of the State's politics against the rise of Hindutva.

Mr. Siddaramaiah has been a trenchant critic of Hindutva, even when many of his party colleagues haven't lent their voice to his critique. For instance, he was the first leader to condemn a ban on hijab in classrooms in 2022, even as many others chose not to comment. He is also probably the only leader, besides a few others like Priyank Kharge, who speaks the language of ideological opposition to Sangh Parivar, accusing them of trying to impose Manusmriti and Chatruvarna, Brahminism in the name of Hindutva. This often made him the target of the troll army, which has given epithets like 'Sidramulla Khan'. For instance, Mr. Siddaramaiah reportedly eating fish before going to a temple was magnified into a huge controversy. He countered it by Brahminical argument against non-vegetarianism. The BJP also painted most of his recent budgets as exercises in 'minority appeasement' and as 'anti-Hindu'.

He has often tried to fight this by drawing a distinction between 'Hindutva' and 'Hinduism', and that he believes in the latter as a faith. In the run-up to the 2023 Assembly polls, he went to temples, sported vermillion, and said his name had 'Rama' in it. He often says he follows the Hindutva of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda.

**Consistent, not strategic**

Even so, many progressive individuals and groups are disappointed with Siddaramaiah on fighting communal forces, particularly in the second term. While he withdrew the Cow Slaughter Bill, 2010, brought by BJP and started celebrating Tipu Jayanti, a response to communalisation of Tipu Sultan, in his first term, he did not similarly roll back The Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Act, 2020. The Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Act, 2021, dubbed 'anti-conversion law', was not rolled back either, despite it being a manifesto promise. The hijab ban order was rolled back just days before a Muslim convention that was planned 'to hold Congress to account' in April, three years after Siddaramaiah became Chief Minister, in May 2023.

A. Narayana, faculty at School of Development, Azim Premji University, said while it is true that Mr. Siddaramaiah has been a vocal critic of 'communal politics', he did not have any concrete creative programme to counter it. "He was consistent, but not strategic. Communalisation of Karnataka politics happened right under his nose. He hasn't been able to stop it. He is a mass leader with a great pull, a secular leader who happens to be in Congress, therefore weakening opposition BJP. Like he is able to convince people on social justice, he hasn't been able to do so against communalism," he said.

However, senior journalist Dinesh Amin Mattu, former media adviser to Mr. Siddaramaiah when he was Chief Minister from 2013 to 2018, argued the very fact that he was the biggest target of BJP and RSS was proof that he was an effective ideological foe. "What he could do as an individual, he has always done. But some decisions are to be taken collectively by the Cabinet, where there have been certain setbacks," he argued.

How exactly will Mr. Siddaramaiah resigning as Chief Minister impact this brand of socialist, progressive politics is a question weighing of the minds of many.

D.K. Shivakumar, tipped off to be the new Chief Minister, is not known to take the Sangh Parivar head-on in the ideological language of Mr. Siddaramaiah, even as he has often called Muslims his 'brothers', and been trolled by the Hindutva ecosystem for it.

In the days to come, Priyank Kharge, who has been consistently questioning the RSS, is expected to emerge as the main voice to articulate the ideological argument against Hindutva in the new dispensation.

## From Page One

## Hectic parleys in Delhi over ministry formation

Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in New Delhi on Friday.

Besides Mr. Shivakumar and Floor leader in Legislative Council N.S. Boseraju, Congress general secretary in charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala will be taking part.

Regarding the swearing in ceremony of Mr. Shivakumar, sources close to him said that multiple locations were being discussed as they are expecting a big crowd. "The swearing in ceremony will be held next week and dates are being discussed," sources said.

On Friday, the scene shifted to Delhi where leaders have been holding discussions with various stakeholders to arrive at consensus on the government formation, a new chief for the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee besides party's nominees for the upcoming Rajya Sabha and Karnataka Legislative Council elections.

Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Shivakumar held discussions even as both the leaders met Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal separately.

Mr. Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra accompanied the veteran leader during his meetings.

# BJP keen to counter aggressive Shivakumar 'in his own style'

Informal discussions have already been held among BJP leaders ever since it became clear that Siddaramaiah would resign as Chief Minister; 'this is a crucial phase where the Opposition has to take the government head on'

**B.S. Satish Kumar**
BENGALURU

The saffron party is also hoping that there will be issues of conflict between supporters of Siddaramaiah and D.K. Shivakumar that they can leverage. FILE PHOTO

While the stage is being set in the Congress for the elevation of D.K. Shivakumar as Chief Minister, the BJP is preparing to face the new dispensation with an aggressive approach.

As Mr. Shivakumar is known for his no-holds-barred approach, the BJP has decided to counter him, as they put it, "in his own style." Already, informal discussions and exchange of ideas have been held among BJP leaders ever since it became clear that Siddaramaiah agreed to relinquish the Chief Minister's post.

**Ahead of polls**

According to sources in the BJP, the timing also demands it. "Only two years are left for the Assembly elections. This is a crucial phase where the Opposition has to take the government head on," observed a BJP leader.

He pointed out that there is a marked difference in the functioning style of Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Shivakumar. "The former is a socialist veteran leader who was known for political craftiness and ideological orientation. We had to counter him in a sensitive manner. However, Mr. Shivakumar is a different personality who is known for taking things head on. We need to match his aggression to counter him," said the leader.

For a start, the BJP leaders are planning to build campaigns around various issues involving Mr. Shivakumar including what they call "irregularities" in garbage tender in Bengaluru.

The BJP is waiting to cash in on the heartburn and disappointment among those who fail to make it to the ministry now.

"Though the power transfer process is appearing to be a smooth affair as of now, there are indications of tricky issues coming up in the future as Mr. Shivakumar cannot afford to ignore the pet schemes or political constituency of his predecessor. Such issues are bound to snowball into conflict situations due to emerging of alternative power centres if Mr. Siddaramaiah stays back in State politics," observed another leader.

Already BJP national president Nitin Nabin, who recently held meetings with the State unit, has given a rough road map to the leaders on the campaigns to be taken up. He had asked the leaders to pull their socks up while observing that they were not aggressive enough in projecting themselves as an effective political alternative by taking the Congress government head-on on various issues.

A series of orientation sessions and organisational study camps have been held for them recently with an eye on the 2028 Assembly elections. The change in leadership in the Congress is set to impact the functioning style of the Opposition party too.

## Former Minister passes away

Venkataramanappa

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Former Karnataka Minister and veteran Congress leader Venkataramanappa passed away following a heart attack at a private hospital in Bengaluru early on Friday. He was 80.

Mr. Venkataramanappa had been undergoing treatment for age-related ailments in a private hospital.

A prominent Congress leader from Tumakuru district, Mr. Venkataramanappa had served as MLA four times and held ministerial portfolios twice during his political career. His son H.V. Venkatesh is an MLA from Pavagada.

Home Minister G. Parameshwara visited the hospital and paid his last respects to the departed leader. He said Mr. Venkataramanappa had emerged as a popular leader of the oppressed classes in Tumakuru.

# 'MSMEs true engines of inclusive development'

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh exploring exhibits displayed at Global MEME Conclave in Bengaluru on Friday.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the true engines of inclusive and holistic development, said Shalini Rajneesh, Chief Secretary.

MSMEs not only contribute to economic output and exports, but more importantly, they generate employment opportunities, encourage innovation, strengthen local economies, and bring opportunities closer to people, she said at a three-day Global MSME Conclave here on Friday.

Ms. Rajneesh said that MSMEs are playing a significant role in establishing competitive and resilient economic systems during an era when the global economy is being reshaped by technology, sustainability, and supply chains.

She added that digital commerce has given opportunities to even small-scale enterprises to compete globally while providing them with appropriate technology, market accessibility, and support. "This presents immense opportunities for our MSMEs to scale up, embrace innovation, and become part of global value chains," she further said.

Reiterating the Karnataka government's commitment towards the creation of a transparent, technologically competent, and investor-friendly business environment, she stated the future of MSMEs would depend upon their ability to adopt digital platforms, automation, Artificial Intelligence, Industry 4.0 solutions, and e-commerce ecosystems.

Further, she highlighted the role of the Center of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence for the betterment of entrepreneurs, and the collaboration with banks alongside restructuring of RSETTI institutions would enhance digital governance and capacity building.

"By aligning skill development programs with industry requirements, we can create a future-ready and globally competitive workforce," she said.

She also highlighted the government's initiative of giving importance to supporting women entrepreneurs, rural enterprises, and first-generation business owners to ensure inclusive and equitable growth.

# V-P unveils commemorative stamp on 45 years of AoL

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan on Friday launched five initiatives spanning youth development, entrepreneurship, sustainability, consciousness studies, and education at The Art of Living International Center, as the organisation marked its 45th anniversary.

The Vice-President unveiled a commemorative stamp marking 45 years of The Art of Living.

The initiatives include the Youth Career Excellence Programme, Faculty of Eastern Knowledge Systems, Art of Living Innovation and Entrepreneurship Incubation, Centre of Excellence on Consciousness Studies and Human Potential, and Eco Shanti.

The ceremony was the culmination of month-long celebrations..

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This is to inform the general public that our client intends to purchase the schedule property. Any person objecting to the proposed sale of the Schedule Property is called upon to submit to us the details of such objections, in writing, together with copies of supporting documents, within a period of 07 days from the publication of this Notice. If no objections are received by us within the above said period, our client will proceed to purchase the Schedule Property and neither will any objections thereto be entertained by our client thereafter nor will such objections, if any, be considered tenable against the Schedule Property.

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**East by: Property bearing No.33 belongs to Sri.E.Venkataramanan, West by: Property bearing No.112/D belongs to Sri.Ananthanarayanan and Smt.Seethalakshmiammal, North by: 15 Feet wide Road and the remaining portion of Site No.112/C, South by: Property bearing No.113.**

**Roopa.R (Advocate)**
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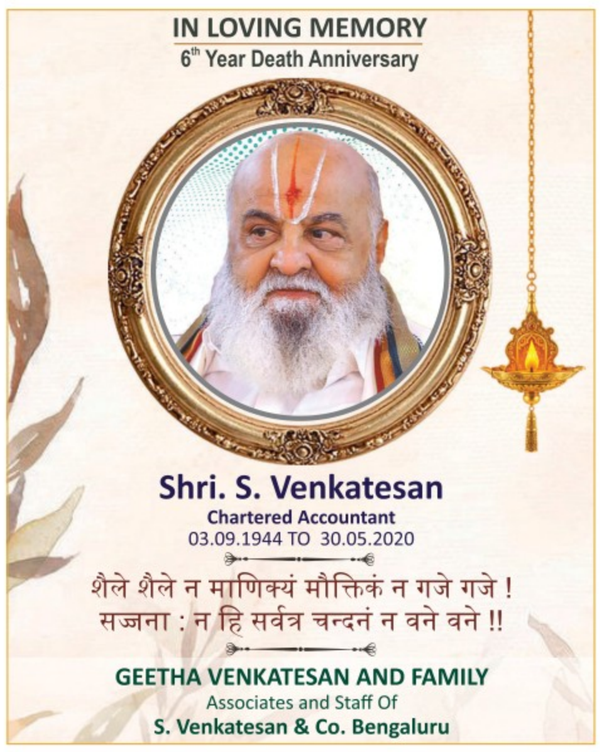
**Behind Shankar Mutt,**
**West of Chord Road,**
**Bangalore-560086.**
**Phone No.9632414310.**

**OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**

**DEATH ANNIVERSARIES**

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# Governor stresses on clean, people-centric governance in Kerala

**Tiki Rajwi**
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Rajendra Arlekar

Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar's policy address to the 16th Legislative Assembly on Friday envisioned the creation of a 'Puthuyuga Keralam,' built on people-centric, transparent and clean governance. The policy speech, while skirting direct criticism of the BJP-led Centre, stated that Kerala "believes strongly in cooperative federalism".

Primarily, the speech sought to expand on the poll promises of the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF), particularly the Indira Guarantees and the 'dream projects' aimed at transforming Kerala into a port-led hub and a civil aviation hub.

It also reiterated the government's plan to hike the monthly welfare pension to ₹3,000. Prominent among other announcements were a three-day monthly menstrual leave for schoolchildren; 'tactical assaults' on organised narcotics networks; the establishment of Jawaharlal Nehru Scientific Centres to inculcate scientific temper; and a "comprehensive revision" of the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act, 2008.

# Shivakumar is politicising Mekedatu issue: T.N. Minister

Nirmalkumar said Karnataka could not conduct *bhoomi pooja* for the construction of a dam across Mekedatu since the Supreme Court had merely sought the submission of a project report

**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

C.T.R. Nirmalkumar

Tamil Nadu Law Minister C.T.R. Nirmalkumar on Friday accused Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar of politicising the Mekedatu issue, though the Supreme Court had only directed Karnataka to submit a project report.

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat in Chennai, he said Karnataka could not conduct *bhoomi puja* for the construction of a dam across the Cauvery at Mekedatu since the Supreme Court had merely sought the submission of the project report.

"Our Chief Minister [C. Joseph Vijay] will not allow it. They [Karnataka] are unnecessarily creating a law-and-order problem in both States. Mr. Shivakumar is doing it to gain political mileage. It is highly condemnable," he said after handing over appointment letters to 45 government advocates.

Mr. Nirmalkumar said both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka shared strong trade relations and peace between the two States was essential. "There is a policy governing inter-State relations, and it explains how States should act on bilateral issues. One cannot act unilaterally without responsibility," he said.

Asked whether the Chief Minister would convene an all-party meeting on the issue, he said the government first needed to finalise the legal course of action to address the matter.

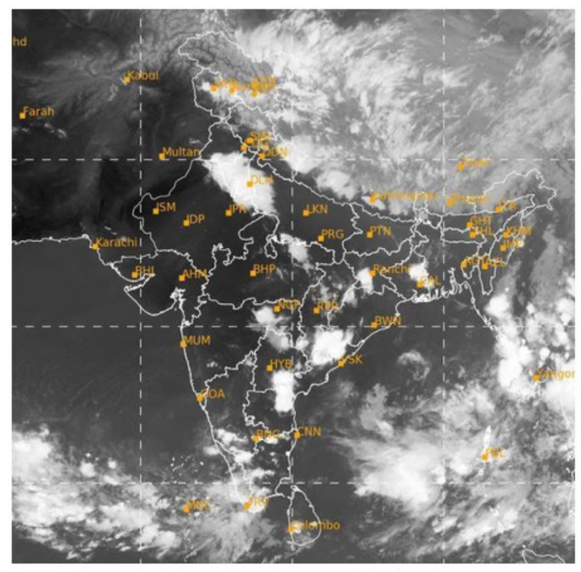
On the release of convicts who had spent many years in prison, he said the government would take steps to release them on parole. "We have initiated measures to provide them permanent relief," he said.

Mr. Nirmalkumar said the government was evolving a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to deal with crimes against women and cases filed under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) Act. "We will speed up the cases. It is our election promise. We are studying pending cases and the shortage of court staff. Our objective is to ensure immediate justice to victims, including those in the Coimbatore case," he said.

The Minister said such an SOP was essential because "during the previous regime", women faced considerable hardship during inquiries and court proceedings. "We are consulting legal experts to evolve the SOP," he said.

## WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday




TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.15 HRS)

**Forecast for Saturday:** Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala and Lakshadweep

| CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN | CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agartala | — | 32.0 | 24.1 | Kozhikode | — | 33.3 | 26.9 |
| Ahmedabad | — | 43.1 | 28.6 | Kurnool | 0.4 | 37.3 | 25.6 |
| Aizawl | — | 33.0 | 21.2 | Lucknow | 17 | 33.0 | 20.9 |
| Prayagraj | 61 | 33.2 | 21.9 | Madurai | — | 39.0 | 25.6 |
| Bengaluru | 0.3 | 32.1 | 22.6 | Mangaluru | — | 33.0 | 26.0 |
| Bhopal | — | 40.6 | 29.9 | Mumbai | — | 35.2 | 29.6 |
| Bhubaneswar | — | 37.4 | 28.0 | Mysuru | 2 | 33.8 | 22.0 |
| Chandigarh | — | 35.6 | 25.0 | New Delhi | 4 | 36.8 | 25.3 |
| Chennai | — | 38.8 | 27.7 | Patna | 29 | 26.2 | 21.0 |
| Coimbatore | — | 35.2 | 24.2 | Port Blair | 7 | 31.0 | 24.4 |
| Dehradun | 22.3 | 33.9 | 17.8 | Puducherry | — | 37.7 | 28.4 |
| Gangtok | 2 | 21.0 | 15.3 | Pune | — | 36.7 | 26.2 |
| Goa | 11 | 34.8 | 28.5 | Raipur | — | 43.9 | 30.0 |
| Guwahati | — | 35.0 | 23.6 | Ranchi | — | 27.8 | 24.0 |
| Hubballi | — | 33.0 | 23.0 | Shillong | 2 | 25.4 | 15.4 |
| Hyderabad | — | 39.7 | 29.6 | Shimla | — | 31.5 | 20.0 |
| Imphal | — | 32.6 | 18.7 | Srinagar | — | 29.8 | 12.5 |
| Jaipur | — | 41.0 | 28.6 | Thiruvananthapuram | 28 | 31.6 | 24.8 |
| Kochi | 5 | 30.8 | 25.6 | Tiruchirapalli | — | 40.1 | 27.4 |
| Kohima | — | 26.0 | 18.0 | Vijayawada | 35 | 41.0 | 23.6 |
| Kolkata | 5 | 35.9 | 25.4 | Visakhapatnam | — | 34.6 | 29.0 |

*(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)*

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

| CITIES | $SO_2$ | $NO_2$ | CO | PM2.5 | PM10 | CODE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ahmedabad | .17 | ..65 | 19 | ..... 44 | ...121 | ..... |
| Bengaluru | .22 | ..23 | 39 | ..... 45 | ....65 | ..... |
| Chennai | ...2 | ..16 | .— | ..... 60 | ...366 | ..... |
| Delhi | .12 | ..39 | 67 | ..... 90 | ...170 | ..... |
| Hyderabad | .15 | ..14 | 31 | ..... 64 | ....91 | ..... |
| Kolkata | ...8 | ..23 | 34 | ..... 60 | ....94 | ..... |
| Lucknow | ...7 | ..45 | 48 | ..... 72 | ....82 | ..... |
| Mumbai | .11 | 109 | 27 | ..... 24 | ....50 | ..... |
| Pune | ..— | ..24 | 60 | ..... 32 | ....51 | ..... |
| Visakhapatnam | ...8 | ..54 | 14 | ..... 61 | ...129 | ..... |

**Yesterday**

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhiwani, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 262 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 16

**Air Quality Code:** Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

**$SO_2$:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**$NO_2$:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

# 18 CPI(M) workers held in Kerala ED attack case; five still at large

**The Hindu Bureau**
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Thiruvananthapuram City police have arrested 18 CPI(M) workers in connection with the attack on Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials and vehicles during the raid at former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's residence in the city on Wednesday.

Those arrested include former Thiruvananthapuram Corporation councillor I.P. Binu. The police stated that five more accused, including former councillor Attukal Unni, are still absconding and efforts are under way to trace their whereabouts.

According to the police, Mr. Unni was allegedly among the main conspirators and purportedly played a leading role in blocking the ED vehicle during the violent protest. Those arrested were produced before the Vanchiyoor District Court and taken to the General Hospital for medical examination. Party workers gathered outside the hospital and raised slogans in support of the arrested leaders.

Senior CPI(M) leader V. Sivankutty criticised the police action, and alleged that raids were conducted in numerous houses without search warrants.

# We have no role in ED action against Pinarayi, says Kerala CM

**The Hindu Bureau**
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The State government has no role in the Enforcement Directorate (ED) searches at the house of Leader of the Opposition and CPI(M) leader Pinarayi Vijayan, Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan said on Friday.

Addressing a press conference here, he criticised the allegations by some CPI (M) leaders linking his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the ED searches. He said the meeting with Mr. Modi was a courtesy call and "attempts to connect it to the ED raids are laughable. Just like Chief Ministers before me, I met the PM after assuming charge as the CM. If CPI(M) leaders are to be believed, when I met him, I asked him to conduct a raid on the Leader of the Opposition, which was done the very next day. My advice to the CPI(M) leaders is not to underestimate the common sense of Malayalis," he said.

"The ED is a Central agency. Some of the respondents in the case had gone to the High Court to prevent the investigation. The court rejected the petition and allowed the ED to continue the probe. What is the role of the State government in this?" he said.

## INBRIEF

### Telangana starts scheme for rural women entrepreneurs

To promote women-led enterprises and rural entrepreneurship, the Telangana government on Friday launched a first-of-its-kind incubation and financial support programme for rural women entrepreneurs under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission. The programme has a total outlay of ₹21.40 crore and is expected to create around 1,200 jobs in rural and semi-urban areas. It was launched by Panchayat Raj Minister Danasari Anasuya Seethakka at the Adivasi Bhavan in Hyderabad.

### Seven arrested for murder of advocate in Hyderabad

Seven persons, including the alleged main conspirators, were arrested by Hyderabad Police in connection with the murder of advocate Khaja Moizuddin, who was allegedly run over deliberately by an SUV near his residence at Masab Tank on May 23. The murder was part of a planned contract killing linked to a Waqf property dispute. Police identified Mujahid Alam Khan as the main conspirator and alleged that he, along with his father Mahboob Alam Khan and associates Hassan Ali and Muneer, planned the murder in a systematic manner.

### Naidu govt. plans to install solar panels in 10 lakh houses

Andhra Pradesh aims at generating 160 GW of green energy and, to achieve it, infrastructure should be developed suitably, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said at a review meeting on Friday. He laid emphasis on using solar energy in government offices and schools, and on the establishment of more EV charging stations. Steps should be taken to install solar panels in 10 lakh homes with a subsidy of ₹20,000 each, he said. Over 1.35 lakh houses belonging to members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have already been covered.

## *Season of surplus*

Labourers dry maize kernels under the scorching sun in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. Farmers who invested heavily in seeds and fertilizers are now grappling with a fall in maize prices owing to a bumper harvest. K.V.S. GIRI

# New complaint from reinstated employee adds to AMMA row

**The Hindu Bureau**
KOCHI

A woman employee of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA) on Friday said she has filed a fresh police complaint against three office-bearers of the film forum, alleging workplace harassment, conspiracy, and character assassination.

Athulya P., a resident of Aluva, said she filed the complaint against AMMA general secretary Cuckoo Parameswaran, treasurer Unni Shivapal, and executive committee member Neena Kurup, with the District Police Chief (Kochi city).

She had earlier lodged two separate complaints on May 2 and May 12, questioning her alleged illegal termination from service at the AMMA office. The complaints were filed against Mr. Shivapal and Ms. Parameswaran. The police are yet to register cases on the complaints.

Though Ms. Athulya was reinstated following the executive committee's decision on May 12, she said she approached the police against the three as they allegedly continued to target her. Addressing the media here on Friday, Ms. Athulya alleged that she learned during the executive meeting on May 12 about a conspiracy to fabricate stories aimed at tarnishing her personal and professional image.

# HYDRAA jobs give transpersons a new role and purpose

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

A small contingent of 16 transpersons recruited a few months ago are now proud foot soldiers of the Hyderabad Disaster Response & Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA), taking active part in the agency's risky operations for securing water bodies and government lands.

HYDRAA has recognised their services by specially naming the contingent as 'Eagle Team'.

Of the total, 11 identify as transwomen and five as transmen. They were referred to HYDRAA by the Police Department around the same time a policy decision was taken by the Telangana government to recruit transgenders for traffic duties.

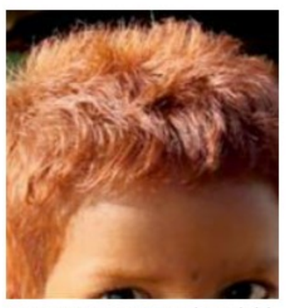
They are 'very very committed', according to HYDRAA chief A.V. Ranganath. "As DRF assistants, they never flinch from their duties on the ground irrespective of whoever is on the other side," he said.

The team recently took part in securing 862 acres of government lands in Ameenpur mandal, and clearing Eedula Kunta of Madhapur of encroachments, according to a statement from HYDRAA.

# Scientists at CCMB identify ultra-rare gene variant behind red hair in Indians

**V. Geetanath**
HYDERABAD

Indians typically have black hair, with grey appearing as a natural part of ageing. But red hair? The colour more commonly associated with Europeans has now been identified in a rare case in India, intriguing scientists at the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad. Their study was prompted by a striking case of a five-year-old Indian girl with red hair on her scalp, eyebrows and body, while retaining dark eyes – an extremely rare phenotype.


MC1R variant in an Indian child with the red hair colour phenotype. CSIR CCMB

From this, researchers have provided fresh insight into the country's complex genetic landscape by uncovering the role of the MC1R gene (melanocortin 1 receptor), a key regulator of skin and hair pigmentation. MC1R gene determines the type of melanin produced in the body, eumelanin, which gives dark brown or black colour, or pheomelanin, which results in red or yellow hues.

Using genome sequencing, researchers identified a rare MC1R variant (c.872C>A) in the child. "The child had inherited two copies of this mutation, one from each parent, indicating an autosomal recessive pattern. Her parents, who carried only one copy each, had typical dark hair. This ultra-rare variant disrupts the function of the MC1R protein, leading to red hair," said senior scientist K. Thangaraj.

To understand how widespread such variations might be, the researchers analysed over 11,000 individuals from 91 populations across the country. Drawing on data from the GenomeIndia Consortium and additional lab samples, the study identified 21 novel or ultra-rare MC1R variants, revealing an unexpected depth of genetic diversity. The team also examined another variant, c.-226A>T (rs3212363), which is linked to lighter skin pigmentation in certain populations.

"India's vast range of skin tones reflects its complex genetic ancestry, shaped by migration, admixture, environment and social practices such as endogamy or marriages within the caste," said Mr. Thangaraj.

# Concrete fever

## India must mandate green cover and reflective materials for its cities

Sri Ganganagar, in Rajasthan touched 48° Celsius this week, the hottest that India has been this year so far. Scorching summer heat in the run-up to the monsoon, which is delayed, is not unusual, but many Indians in the informal sector have to work directly under the sun in unprotected environments. Climate change is inextricably linked to heatwaves. India Meteorological Department data show that the frequency of heatwave spells has risen by 0.1 days per decade since 1961 over India's Core Heatwave Zone that includes the central, northwestern, and eastern coastal regions, or about 30% of India's total land area. Their maximum duration has increased by 0.55 days per decade; and the 2015-25 interval is, according to the World Meteorological Organization, the warmest 11-year stretch since records began. But the emissions that produced these numbers are only the proximate villain. What makes India's heat uniquely lethal is not the atmosphere alone. Urban heat islands across Indian cities now run 2°C to 10°C hotter than their surrounding rural areas, the difference manufactured by concrete, asphalt, the butchering of tree cover, and the waste heat exhaled by the thousands of air-conditioners cooling offices. Delhi's average humidity rose by eight percentage points between 2015-19 and 2020-24. This has a lot to do with an increasingly sealed urban surface than global warming alone. This is where the seduction of the technological fix becomes dangerous with the instinct being to reach for more, better and cheaper ACs. This might shield the privileged office worker at the expense of the vast majority, many of whom are outdoor workers and street vendors. Paradoxically, the machines are, in a thermodynamic sense, fuelling the problem.

What is called for instead is unglamorous, slow and politically difficult: urban design that mandates reflective materials and green cover, building codes calibrated to a climate that has already shifted; and, most urgently, the enforcement of labour laws that already exist but are honoured largely in the breach. These laws require employers to stop outdoor work when the heat index crosses thresholds that human physiology cannot safely absorb. India has not yet had a serious national conversation about budget heads for heat management.

# Different directions

## The Quad is unable to push toward its worthy objectives

The Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting this week, the third such engagement since U.S. President Donald Trump began his tenure, was meant to reassure all partners – India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. – that the grouping remains valid and viable, despite all the rapid geopolitical developments. To that end, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, who were hosted by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in Delhi, agreed to firm up a number of initiatives. On Indo-Pacific maritime security, they agreed on three initiatives including one for Maritime Surveillance Collaboration (IPMSC), a Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), and a Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission. They also finalised a Quad Critical Mineral cooperation initiative, an energy security partnership, and the first ever Quad infrastructural project to build a port in Fiji. The joint statement reiterated their commitment to the Quad's geopolitical positions: a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP); respecting territorial integrity; countering cross-border terrorism; and upholding international law with a focus on UNCLOS. The statement expressed concern over the Pahalgam attack, developments in the East and South China Seas, and the Strait of Hormuz blockade. Yet, there were also clear constraints on the language, which appeared to arise out of the U.S.'s new engagement with China and Russia. Quad partners decried Iranian actions in the conflict but made no mention of the U.S.-Israel's initiation of the conflict with Iran, the U.S. torpedoing of an Iranian ship in the Indian Ocean, or Washington's talks with Tehran using Pakistan as mediator. Each of these newly developed vectors poses a challenge to Quad unity, while the lack of consultation before and during the West Asia conflict raises questions about the Quad's relevance.

The future of the Quad engagement emerged as another concern. The Quad began at an official-level in 2007, was reborn in 2017 at a higher official level, and was upgraded to leader-level engagement in 2021. India assumed the Quad chair in 2024, but has since faced difficulties in hosting the summit. In 2024, tensions with the U.S. over the Pannun-Nijjar case delayed the summit and the Biden administration insisted on holding it in Baltimore. In 2025, tensions over tariffs, sanctions, trade, and Operation Sindoor claims disrupted plans for Mr. Trump and other leaders to meet in Delhi. Mid-way through 2026, that meeting is yet to be scheduled, and if India demits the Chair to Australia without holding a Summit, it may indicate a downgrade in engagement. The Quad's regional initiatives on climate change, health, debt financing, infrastructure and maritime security remain a force for good in the Indo-Pacific. However, the grouping's internal contradictions, particularly in the face of the U.S.'s unilateral moves across the world, are a challenge. The Quad could benefit from some reflection on how to ensure that the grouping moves forward in tandem on its worthy objectives, not as one that pulls in different directions.

# *International law, 'optional' for powerful states*

**Shashi Tharoor**

Fourth-term Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) for Thiruvananthapuram (Congress party), the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs and the Sahitya Akademi Award-winning author of 29 books, including 'Pax Indica' (2012) and The 'New World Disorder' (2020)

Voltaire's famous quip about the Holy Roman Empire – that it was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire – has often come to mind when I think about the contemporary state of public international law. For all its lofty aspirations, it is frequently neither truly public, nor reliably international, nor consistently law. It is public only in the sense that it concerns states rather than private actors; international only insofar as sovereigns consent to be bound; and law only to the extent that it can be enforced – an increasingly fragile proposition in a world where power, not principle, is again determining outcomes.

**The erosion of an edifice of norms**

Over the last century and a half, humanity painstakingly constructed an edifice of norms, treaties and institutions meant to restrain the worst impulses of states. From the Hague Conventions to the Geneva Conventions, from the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), from human rights covenants to arms-control regimes, the international community sought to replace the anarchy of the past with a rules-based order. Yet, in recent years, that order has been fraying at an alarming pace. Across continents and conflicts, states have violated foundational principles with impunity, eroding the credibility of the very system meant to protect global peace and stability.

The most fundamental of these principles is the UN Charter's prohibition on the use of force and its guarantee of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran in 2026 stand as the starkest breaches of this norm in decades: an unprovoked assault on a sovereign state, justified through dubious claims and enforced through overwhelming military might. Both invasions confirmed that the Charter's core promise could be shredded when a powerful state chose to do so.

The U.S. and Russian records are equally deplorable in disregarding the prohibition on force. The 2003 Iraq invasion, undertaken without Security Council authorisation and justified on grounds later proven baseless, remains one of the most consequential breaches of the Charter that set a precedent for Russia's conduct. More recently, the targeted killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran have raised serious questions about the erosion of the norm against unilateral force. Israel's repeated military operations in Gaza and Lebanon, including large-scale bombardments causing extensive civilian casualties, have also drawn widespread allegations of disproportionate force and violations of international humanitarian law.

The pattern is not confined to major powers. Türkiye's incursions into northern Syria, Azerbaijan's use of force in Nagorno-Karabakh, and Ethiopia's conduct in the Tigray conflict, including cross-border strikes into Sudan, have all arguably breached international norms.

> Imperfect though it may be, the rules-based order remains humanity's strongest defence against chaos

Beyond the use of force, states have violated UNCLOS, one of the most widely ratified treaties in the world. The South China Sea has become a theatre of systematic disregard for maritime law. China's expansive "nine-dash line" claim, rejected by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016, continues to be enforced through militarised artificial islands, harassment of foreign vessels, and coercive coast-guard tactics. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia have all faced incursions into their exclusive economic zones.

The Strait of Hormuz has witnessed repeated blockades and interdictions. Iran and the U.S. have seized foreign tankers, closed the Strait, and imposed maritime blockades in the region, without clear legal justification under UNCLOS. These actions undermine the principle of freedom of navigation, a cornerstone of global trade and maritime stability.

**Brazen actions across the world**

International humanitarian law has also suffered grievous violations. In Syria, the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons, indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas, and siege tactics have been extensively documented. Non-state actors such as the Islamic State (ISIS) and various militias have committed atrocities on a massive scale. In Yemen, the Saudi-led coalition and Houthi rebels alike have been accused of targeting civilians, hospitals, and critical infrastructure. In Ethiopia's Tigray region, reports of mass killings, sexual violence, and starvation as a weapon of war have shocked the conscience of the world.

Human rights treaties, too, have been flouted with increasing brazenness. Israel's indiscriminate killing of civilians in Gaza and China's treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang – including mass detention, forced labour, and cultural erasure – have been described by several governments and scholars as crimes against humanity. Myanmar's military junta has carried out systematic abuses against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities, prompting genocide allegations. In Iran, the violent suppression of protests following the death of Mahsa Amini revealed a pattern of extrajudicial killings and torture. Even democratic states have not been immune: the U.S.'s use of torture during the "war on terror", Australia's offshore detention of asylum seekers, and Europe's pushbacks of migrants in the Mediterranean have all raised serious legal and moral concerns.

Arms-control regimes have also weakened. The collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the erosion of the Open Skies Treaty, and the uncertain future of the New START agreement have revived fears of a new arms race. North Korea continues to defy UN resolutions with missile tests and nuclear development.

Iran's nuclear programme, once constrained by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has allegedly accelerated following the agreement's unravelling. These developments threaten to undo decades of painstaking progress in nuclear restraint.

Environmental law, too, has suffered. States have failed to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement, with emissions rising and climate targets slipping out of reach. Illegal deforestation in the Amazon, often abetted by state actors, violates international norms on biodiversity and environmental protection. Deep-sea mining, pursued without adequate regulation, threatens fragile marine ecosystems.

**There is a vacuum**

What ties these disparate violations together is not merely their frequency but their impunity. International law depends on consent, reciprocity, and enforcement through collective mechanisms. Yet, the Security Council is paralysed by geopolitical rivalries; the International Criminal Court faces accusations of bias and lacks jurisdiction over major powers; and treaty bodies often rely on voluntary compliance. In this vacuum, states increasingly act as though power, not principle, determines legality. Thucydides' bleak observation – "the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must" – resonates today with unsettling clarity. When powerful states violate international law without consequence, they signal to others that norms are optional and that might is right. The result is a world sliding back toward the law of the jungle.

This is not merely a philosophical concern. The erosion of international law has tangible consequences: conflicts become harder to resolve, civilians bear the brunt of violence, global commons are degraded, and trust between nations evaporates. The rules-based order, imperfect as it is, remains humanity's best defence against chaos.

The challenge in reaffirming the value of international law is that it requires strengthening multilateral institutions, enhancing accountability mechanisms, and cultivating a global political culture that prizes restraint over adventurism. It also requires recognising that international law is not a panacea but a framework – a set of shared expectations that guide behaviour even when perfect compliance is elusive. Without it, the world risks returning to a state where power alone determines outcomes. And in such a world, it is not only the weak who suffer; ultimately, everyone does.

# *'Off with their heads' – the purge of Republican dissenters*

**Anil Raman**

Retired Brigadier and a research fellow in the Geopolitics Programme of Takshashila Institution

Foreign observers, including Indians often question why the Republicans do not question or stymie United State President Donald Trump's controversial policies. The answer lies in Indian-style "high command" politics, where legislators who cross the party boss are routinely denied electoral tickets and sidelined.

For decades, the U.S. boasted a system allowing local grassroots voters, rather than central party elites, to choose candidates. Today, however, the American Republican Party is undergoing a radical transformation that mirrors this hierarchical structure. The transformation was on full display in Kentucky's fourth congressional district, where Mr. Trump has successfully orchestrated the political defeat of one of his own lawmakers, Congressman Thomas Massie, after a brutal $32-million- proxy war that became a referendum on loyalty within the Republican Party.

**The culture of fear**

To comprehend this clash, one must understand why American Republicans fear crossing Mr. Trump. Defying him carries a career-ending penalty; just days ago, Louisiana Senator Bill Cassidy, who voted to impeach Trump in 2021, was decisively ousted in his State's primary election. As Senator Lindsey Graham trailingly observed on American television, those who attempt to oppose Mr. Trump face certain political destruction. Mr. Trump commands an iron grip on the Republican base. For a U.S. lawmaker, a single angry tweet can instantly dry up campaign funding and turn lifelong supporters into vocal opponents.

Yet, Thomas Massie steadfastly refused to yield. An eccentric, 55-year-old MIT-trained engineer and libertarian, Mr. Massie has represented Kentucky in the House since 2012. A staunch conservative who entered politics through the Tea Party movement, he lives off-the-grid in a self-built solar-powered house and remains deeply popular locally. His defining trait is a stubborn, often contrarian, insistence on absolute constitutional consistency. He consistently votes independently of party leadership, earning a reputation as Washington's premier renegade.

> The Trumpian targeting of Republican dissenters, along with growing inner-party feuds, has consequences for America and India alike

During Trump's second administration, Mr. Massie has emerged as a persistent thorn in the executive's side. He voted against Mr. Trump's signature "One Big Beautiful Bill", arguing that it would explode the national debt and fuel inflation.

He further irritated the administration by successfully spearheading a bipartisan push to compel the government to release the unredacted Jeffrey Epstein files. Most critically, as a staunch anti-interventionist, Mr. Massie has vocalised fierce opposition to the escalating U.S.-backed military conflict with Iran, warning that foreign engagements drain American resources.

**The Trumpian backlash**

On Truth Social, the President branded Mr. Massie as a "Third Rate Congressman" and the "worst and most unreliable Republican Congressman in history." To orchestrate his defeat, Mr. Trump hand-picked Ed Gallrein, a retired Navy SEAL, to challenge Mr. Massie in the primary. The environment became so toxic that Mr. Trump even threatened to back primary challenges against other popular Republicans, such as Lauren Boebert, simply for travelling to Kentucky to campaign on Mr. Massie's behalf.

Mr. Trump's campaign was bolstered by powerful external allies. The race became a $32-million blitzkrieg largely due to the pro-Israel lobby – specifically the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), alongside conservative billionaires Miriam Adelson and Paul Singer. Because Mr. Massie opposed U.S. military action against Iran and routinely voted against foreign aid packages, AIPAC flooded Kentucky with $9 million in attack ads, framing him as an adversary of Israel. Mr. Massie retaliated by introducing a bill to force AIPAC lobbyists to register as foreign agents under the Department of Justice, framing the election as a referendum on whether foreign lobbies can dictate terms to American lawmakers.

**Why this matters for U.S. politics**

Indians, from the IT parks of Bengaluru to the residents of Poonch on the Line of Control, must pay close attention to this development as its outcome has profound consequences for American governance and global stability.

Mr. Massie lost. His defeat demonstrates that even immense local popularity and principled conservatism may no longer be sufficient to shield a lawmaker from executive wrath. The result sends a clear message across the Republican Party: opposition to Mr. Trump carries potentially fatal political consequences. For aspiring lawmakers, loyalty increasingly matters more than independence.

The Republican Party's transformation into a more centralised political structure is therefore no longer a possibility but an observable reality. Mr. Massie's defeat suggests that ideological dissent, even from a conservative with impeccable Republican credentials, can trigger a coordinated campaign involving the White House, influential donors and powerful interest groups.

For India, which relies on a stable, predictable and democratic American foreign policy, a U.S. Congress stripped of robust internal checks and balances represents a dangerous prospect. As authority becomes increasingly concentrated, foreign and domestic policy alike become more dependent on the preferences of a narrower political circle.

The Massie case serves as a stark reminder that the principal challenge facing American democracy may lie not merely in partisan conflict between Republicans and Democrats, but in the shrinking space for disagreement within one of the country's two major political parties.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Power shift**

Karnataka's citizens voted for a stable five-year government, not a game of musical chairs at Vidhana Soudha (Front page, "Power shift in Karnataka as Siddaramaiah resigns", May 29).

The State is navigating crucial economic pressures and public infrastructure demands. With a new Chief Minister at the helm, the administration must urgently move beyond internal party politics and focus on governance. For the Indian National Congress party to regain its past glory, its leadership must undertake rigorous and unsparing introspection. It should begin with Karnataka.

**Kshirasagara Balaji Rao,**
Hyderabad

**Crisis in education**

The recurring turmoil around NEET leaks, glitches in the CBSE's online evaluation systems and the clumsy handling of the three-language formula expose a deeper malaise in India's education governance: an armchair bureaucracy insulated from the anxieties of students. Policies affecting millions of impressionable young minds are drafted in administrative silos, with little thought to psychological consequences or ground realities. India's education apparatus remains excessively centralised, rule-bound and obsessed with compliance over empathy. A generation pitted in a hyper-competitive ecosystem cannot be managed through dated bureaucratic reflexes. Educational governance needs more academic leadership, technological competence and emotional intelligence. When systems repeatedly fail students, the problem ceases to be technical. It becomes institutional indifference.

**R. Narayanan,**
Navi Mumbai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name.

Ningbo, a port city in southern Zhejiang province, around 200 kilometres south of Shanghai, is a key hub for China's booming Electric Vehicles industry. GETTY IMAGES

# Inside China's green transition

Ningbo, in southern Zhejiang province of China, was once a historic maritime hub shaped by Buddhist culture and trade. It has now emerged as a key hub for showcasing China's green industrial push, where electric vehicles, advanced manufacturing, and tightly integrated supply chains are powering the country's bid for global leadership in the technologies of the future. **Ananth Krishnan** reports from the port city

Lying at the foothills of the Mao mountains in southern China, the Temple of King Ashoka is one of the main attractions in Ningbo, a port city in southern Zhejiang province, around 200 kilometres south of Shanghai. Hymns fill the courtyards of the massive temple complex, which is largely empty on a busy weekday.

The temple's history goes back to more than 1,700 years, when it was built during the Western Jin Dynasty. It is one of the 19 Ashoka stupas constructed in China as Buddhism spread. In Ningbo, Buddhist culture, coupled with a long tradition of maritime commerce, has been an important part of the city's history since the 7th century Tang Dynasty, when it emerged as a major port.

Today, the city has emerged at the heart of a different kind of global commerce. It is a key hub for China's booming Electric Vehicles (EV) industry, where new energy automotives are manufactured in sprawling, modern factories and then exported around the world.

## 'A future factory'

"The future is our history," reads the sign above the entrance to the factory of Zeekr, a high-end EV brand headquartered in Ningbo and part of Chinese automaker, the Geely Auto Group. Geely also manufactures Volvo Cars, having acquired the company from Ford in 2010, and luxury Lotus autos, after garnering a controlling stake in the British automaker in 2017. EVs have become central to Geely's future. The group sold close to 1.7 million EVs in 2025, a stunning 90% rise from the previous year.

In China, Zeekr is the group's flagship product in this space. Zeekr's cars that roll off the assembly line in Ningbo are transported across China and shipped to Europe and Southeast Asia, its two biggest overseas markets. The Ningbo plant, company representative Zhang Ting says, has been dubbed "a future factory".

It is not hard to see why. The factory floor is a scene out of Star Wars. Automated yellow robotic transports that look like toy cars whizz around the factory floor. One beeps in protest as it brushes up against my feet. Frames of yet-to-be-completed EV cars descend from massive yellow platforms onto the assembly line, where the only humans on site are inspectors checking them for flaws. "Around 60-70% of the work is done by robots," Zhang says. There are still some 2,300 people working in this factory, where the EVs are assembled into their final form. The welding factory, also in Zhejiang, is completely autonomous.

A dashboard notes that as of 4 p.m. on a recent afternoon, 366 cars had rolled off the production line, somewhat below the maximum daily capacity of 1,300. The reason, one Zeekr executive explains, is an intended nimbleness. The quick turnaround time allows the company to follow a model where it only manufactures cars for which it has already received a confirmed order.

Zeekr's "future factory" was the result of a 10 billion RMB ($1.47 billion) investment. At every turn, the emphasis is on "green". One live dashboard measures the factory's carbon footprint at any given minute, including the electricity and water use per vehicle, and the savings from a waste heat recovery system designed to be energy-efficient. This year, the savings have so far amounted to the equivalent of the annual gas consumption of 736 Chinese households.

> Meaningful competition lies in capabilities, technology, and systems. It is not only about price
>
> **HE XIAOPENG**
> Founder, Xpeng Motors

## On top of the 'green charts'

Going green appears to have become an obsession in Zhejiang, a province in China's southern manufacturing heartland that played a key role in the country's reform and opening period starting in the 1980s.

Wang Hao, an official from the provincial government, reels off statistics showing the province at the top of China's 'green charts'. Zhejiang's PM 2.5 particulate air pollution fell last year to an average slightly under 25 – "like Europe," says another official. Last year, the province notched two other landmarks: renewables, for the first time, accounted for 50% of total installed energy capacity; and 100% of the surface water met national standards, following a massive campaign to crack down on industrial waste.

Across the city from the sleek Zeekr factory is a symbol of Ningbo's past – the towering smoke stacks of the Ningbo Iron and Steel Company, or Ninggang, one of China's oldest and biggest steel producers. Local officials cite the company's story as a snapshot of China's green transition – and how Beijing spent billions in overhauling older polluting industries and holding them to stricter emission standards.

At Ninggang, around 4 billion RMB ($588 million) was spent on "more than 100 emission renovation projects," says Yang Zhenzhu, a representative of the company. Many of these were aimed at reducing emissions and more efficiently recycling the waste water from steel production. Today, the company hosts visitors from companies around China, who come to study it as a model of change.

The first stop on the Ninggang tour for visitors, who are separated from burning hot furnaces carrying golden, molten iron by thin glass walls, is an elaborate water treatment arrangement. All of the water that is used is recycled, coming from the city's major wastewater treatment plant. This water is piped to Ninggang's own treatment station for further treatment, and the excess is desalinated and reused. Zero solid waste is allowed to leave the factory. Waste containing iron and carbon is treated at another treatment facility and reused.

Pollution remains a serious problem in China. Even in Beijing, despite the undeniable progress – "airpocalyspe" days that were regular in the winters of Beijing a decade ago are now far less common – maintaining clean skies is a continuing battle. One clear takeaway from Zhejiang is that the green transition neither came easily, nor for free. Indeed, it required serious and sustained investment on the one hand, and no-nonsense policing and enforcement on the other.

Corruption is rarely spoken of in the context of pollution. Yet, Chinese officials often point to how, in the past, lax enforcement was a huge challenge. Bribes to local officials to look the other way were a common phenomenon. But a crackdown on corruption over the past decade has changed that. It is much harder for polluting factories to pay their way out of punishments for violating standards, while "big data" is being deployed to track factories in real time.

If investment and enforcement have been two key pillars of China's green transformation, technology is a third. Chinese companies making EVs, batteries, and solar panels are in an apparent unending race to come up with technologies that are more efficient and cheaper. Technology, more than cost, explains China's dominance of the global EV market, says He Xiaopeng, who is the founder of another Chinese EV player, Xpeng Motors, a competitor of Zeekr's. "Meaningful competition lies in capabilities, technology and systems. It is not only about price," he says.

China accounted for around 60% of all global EV sales, according to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) Global EV Outlook 2024. Its dominance in batteries is starker, with China controlling 76% of global lithium-ion battery cell manufacturing, giving its firms a major cost advantage, according to Bloomberg data. Solar photovoltaics are a similar story. To give a sense of the scale, China in 2023 commissioned as many PVs as the rest of the world did, estimated the IEA. China's overwhelming presence in the critical minerals industry underpins its dominance of supply chains, with the country processing 90% of rare earth elements, and 60-70% of lithium and cobalt, which are key for manufacturing batteries.

Indeed, China's proposition to the world is "a complete supply chain", says Qian Zhimin, who is Deputy Director of China's Committee on Population, Resources and Environment.

> The fact is that energy security and green transition is not a binary choice for us but a strategic pathway on which both complement each other.
>
> **QIAN ZHIMIN**
> Deputy Director of China's Committee on Population, Resources and Environment.

For Chinese policymakers, the ongoing crisis in West Asia has only further driven home the urgency of green transformation and the advantages of diversifying energy sources. "Today, energy security and green transition are converging," Qian says. "The recent tensions [in West Asia], and the tensions we are seeing in maritime routes like the Strait of Hormuz, mean traditional energy systems continue to face strong external shocks. So green transition is now a practical choice to enhance energy security and self-reliance in a complex external environment. And China offers a complete supply chain."

## Impact on the world

If China sees its "complete" supply chain as a strategic advantage, for the rest of the world, dependence on China in these industries of the future is a cause for concern. China's cost competitiveness and technological edge may be enablers of green transformations, but the other side of the equation is the enormous impact of Chinese imports on companies in these sectors around the world that are struggling to stay afloat. The European Union (EU) is a case in point.

The EU, along with Southeast Asia, has more than any other region opened up to Chinese EV and renewable energy companies. China's exports, warned a February 2026 report from an advisory body to the French government, were "affecting the core of Europe's industrial strongholds: automotive, batteries, industrial equipment, chemicals, and others."

"On average, nearly a quarter of European exports is currently exposed to Chinese competition that we deem critical," it said. "On the domestic market, up to 55% of European manufacturing output could be threatened over the medium term if current trends persist. This proportion varies significantly across countries: it reaches around 70% in Germany, 60% in Italy, 50% in Spain and 36% in France," the report added, noting that in 2024, the EU imported €11.1 billion worth of solar panels, €2.9 billion of liquid biofuels, and €0.5 billion worth of wind turbines from extra-EU countries, totalling about €14.5 billion in imports of green energy products. China accounted for 98% of these imports.

Fearing the prospect of "accelerated deindustrialisation", the report said the cost gap estimated by European companies with regard to China was 30-40%. It cited PVs as an early indicator of what may come in other sectors. Since the mid-2000s, when China began massive investments in solar, its growth had led to "a near-monopoly situation for China in photovoltaics" with market share "exceeding 80% across all segments of the value chain."

## Leadership on climate change

For much of the Global South, however, China is seen as offering the prospect of an affordable green transformation – a proposition that, many countries note, the West has been unable to compete with, even as the U.S. withdraws from global leadership on climate change.

"China is a leader in this area not for no reason," said Fazeel Najeeb, who is the Maldives Ambassador in Beijing and was recently in Ningbo along with the country's Minister of State for Climate Change, Environment and Energy, Mohamed Faiz, at a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation green forum convened by China, reflecting its global ambitions in the sector. "China's leadership is undeniable, whether or not others are withdrawing from issues such as climate change that have a huge bearing on countries like us."

The Maldives, for instance, is clear about seeking opportunities from China, including for its landmark RasMale project, an initiative pushed by President Mohamed Muizzu, which envisages building a zero-carbon safe island on 1,153 hectares of reclaimed land.

Najeeb says, "We are requesting China to work with us to make this island a future city powered by renewable energy entirely, with electric cars and no fossil fuels. Right now, we spend around 33% of our GDP on fossil fuels. We would like to change this."

Maldives is among the many countries in the midst of energy shortages. The Iran crisis, Qian notes, has driven home the lesson that renewable energy "reduces vulnerability to fluctuations in international oil price and enhances economic resilience." He points out that coal still accounts for 52% of primary energy consumption in China and 56% in India. "The fact is that energy security and green transition is not a binary choice for us," he says, "but a strategic pathway on which both complement each other."

*ananth.krishnan@thehindu.co.in*

## Rising green powerhouse | China's EV sales, exports and clean energy trade have soared, making it a dominant force in the global green economy

**Chart 1:** The chart shows domestic EV sales in China from 2021 to 2024. *(in million)*

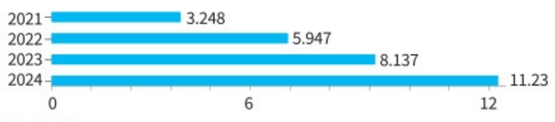



**Chart 2:** China's monthly EV exports by value. *(in $ billion)*

*Ningbo has emerged as the key hub for China's booming Electric Vehicles (EV)*

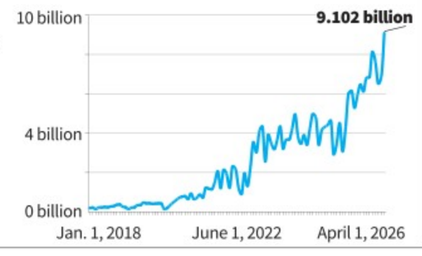



**Chart 3:** China's EV exports by destination. *($ billion)*

*Europe is the largest destination for Chinese EV exports.*

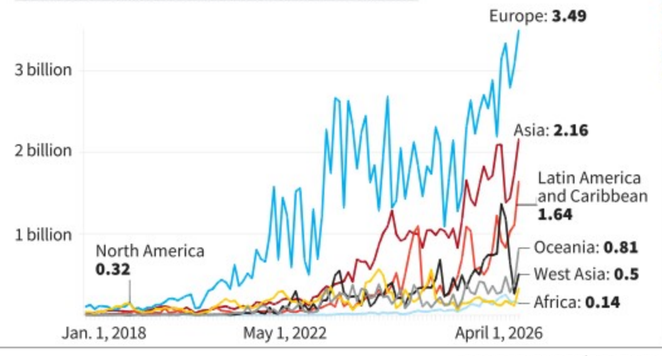
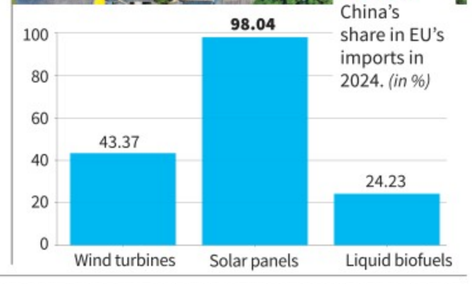


**Chart 4:** China's share in EU's imports in 2024. *(in %)*




SOURCE: EMBER'S DATA EXPLORER. EUROSTAT AND THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY

## From Page One

## NEET leak left students, families traumatised: SC

The court asked the Ministry to specify the steps taken to retain specialised personnel, preserve institutional memory, and ensure plurality of expertise in the conduct of NEET. "The endeavour is to ensure that the NTA has the physical and intellectual wherewithal to ensure no incidents like in the NEET-UG 2024 and 2026 exams occur again," Justice Narasimha said.

Further, the court highlighted the need for accountability in the face of such severe mishaps which affect lakhs of students. "The real problem will not stop till there is actual accountability. Not in terms of so and so will be liable, it will be effective when we know which individual shoulders the responsibility. Unless you identify the specific duty-bearers, it will be difficult," Justice Narasimha observed.

In its affidavit, the NTA said it was all set to conduct the NEET-UG in the Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode from next year instead of the pen-and-paper mode after consulting the Centre. "The transition will be implemented from the next examination cycle in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare [the client Ministry for NEET-UG] – thereby bringing all major NTA examinations onto the CBT platform," it said.

The agency also said that it has introduced multiple sets of question papers, with one set retained as a back-up. A designated senior officer will oversee the entire printing process, and the use of electronic devices has now been prohibited. All CCTV recordings would also be preserved.

The NTA said the transportation of question papers is now being carried out through the India Post (a government entity), with chain-of-custody protocols. The papers would be escorted by the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) from the printing press to nodal hubs, after which the India Post would then transport the papers to district custodians, and the district police would take them to examination centres.

The NTA informed the court that the re-examination scheduled for June 21 would be conducted under a strengthened standard operating procedure (SOP) framework incorporating multi-layer authentication, enhanced surveillance and inter-agency coordination. The Chairman of the High Powered Steering Committee on NTA Reforms, Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, said a comprehensive "clean-up" of the systemic issues haunting the conduct of NEET-UG was under way.

The court has scheduled the next hearing on the matter for the second week of July.

## IMD lowers rain forecast, pushes onset date to June

The agency does not use the term "drought" in its lexicon, a nomenclature used by the Agriculture Ministry. Of the four broad geographical regions, only the Northeast is forecast to get a "normal" monsoon; the northwest, central India, the southern peninsula and the monsoon core zone that feeds most of the country's rain-fed farmland are all expected to fall short. June alone is pegged at under 92% of its average.

D.S. Pai, who heads the IMD's Regional Meteorological Centre in Chennai and who co-authored the statistical model the department uses to forecast the Kerala onset, offered a finer-grained account. The monsoon had reached the Andaman Sea on time, even slightly early, and rain was still falling there, he said. "Only thing, the wind has not strengthened."

Issuing a deficiency warning twice before the rain has entered Kerala is something the IMD has not done since 2015. That year offers an uncomfortable rhyme: a mid-May onset prediction of May 30 overshot to June 5, an April forecast of 93% cut to 88% in June, and a season that closed at 86%. With the 88% rain in 2014, it made the fourth back-to-back pair of deficient years in 115 years, both under a building El Niño.

Whether 2026 will follow suit depends on intra-seasonal wildcards such as a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (an irregular change in sea-surface temperature that alters wind and rain patterns but which is now absent), a favourable swing of the Madden-Julian Oscillation (an eastward moving cloud and rainfall near the equator every 30-60 days) or a timely low-pressure system – all of which could lift the total rainfall, while their absence could lower it.

The IMD reckons there is a 92% chance of El Niño conditions during the season – the main reason for the expected shortfall.

# Truck driver transporting rice to Manipur's Ukhrul killed in ambush

A Naga police constable also injured in the incident which took place on the Imphal-Ukhrul highway; Chief Minister condemns the attack and adds that it was carried out by 'vested interest groups' to derail government's efforts on peace

**The Hindu Bureau**
GUWAHATI

Unidentified gunmen ambushed an escorted goods vehicle in Manipur's Ukhrul district on Friday morning, killing a truck driver from West Bengal and injuring a police constable.

An official from the district administration said the trucks and vehicles of security personnel came under attack between Leingangching and TM Kasom on the National Highway 202 that connects Manipur's capital, Imphal, with the Ukhrul town, the headquarters of the Ukhrul district. The area where the incident happened is within the jurisdiction of the Litan police station and is Kuki-dominated.

Security personnel confront protesters who were blocking a convoy of vehicles on the NH-202. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**Cowardly act, says CM**

The driver, killed on the spot, was identified as 65-year-old Nitish Das from the Hooghly district of West Bengal. His truck was transporting rice for the Food Corporation of India from Imphal to Ukhrul. The Manipur police constable, who sustained bullet injuries on one of his knees, was identified as Disingam Maringmei, a 34-year-old Naga from Sangaiprou in Imphal West district. "Personnel of the Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, and the State police have been escorting trucks on the Imphal-Ukhrul highway. Shortly before the incident, local protestors blocked roads at Shangkai to prevent the movement of the trucks," the official said. Security personnel escorting the trucks fired tear gas shells to disperse the crowd. The trucks left for Ukhrul after the road was cleared, but came under attack after six km uphill. No group has claimed responsibility so far for the ambush that took place at the very spot where two Naga men were killed on April 18.

Chief Minister of Manipur Yumnam Khemchand Singh condemned the attack. "Ambushing a goods vehicle and taking the life of a driver, who plays a crucial role in ensuring the uninterrupted supply of essential items across the State, is one of the most cowardly acts and intends to aggravate the tense situation prevailing in the area," he said. He said the ambush seemed to have been carried out by vested interest groups with the "ill motive to derail the government's initiatives" to restore normalcy. The Chief Minister further said that a search and cordon operation was being conducted to nab the culprits.

**A region of unrest**

The Litan area has been volatile since February 7, when an assault case snowballed into a conflict between the Kukis and the Nagas. Scores of houses were torched, and at least five people were killed in different incidents of violence.

The Ukhrul district unit of the Working Committee of the Kuki Civil Society Organisations defended the road blockade at Shangkai. Condemning the May 13 killing of three church leaders in the adjoining Kangpokpi district and the abduction of 14 Kuki civilians thereafter, the organisation said the protest was a legitimate cry for justice. "Instead of addressing our genuine grievances, the CRPF and Rapid Action Force Personnel responded with brutal, excessive force against unarmed civilians, especially women," the organisation said.

The Working Committee of the Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL), the apex body of the Tangkhul community that dominates the Ukhrul district, blamed the ambush on Kuki "narco-terrorists". The organisation claimed that Kuki extremists have been extorting civilians along the NH-202 and using the stretch as their "shooting range". It said the government "must act decisively to clear the highway, neutralise the extremists, and restore normalcy".

## Naga body threatens to boycott Manipur govt.

**The Hindu Bureau**
GUWAHATI

The All Naga Students' Association, Manipur (ANSAM) has threatened to boycott the State government if it fails to secure the release of six Naga hostages in four days.

The apex Naga student organisation has also set a similar deadline for the government to find and punish the killers of three Naga civilians and three Thadou church leaders.

In a statement on Friday, the ANSAM accused Kuki extremists of taking 18 Liangmai Naga hostage after the three church leaders were ambushed and killed on May 13. It said six of these hostages, including two pastors, continue to be in captivity.

The ANSAM said it has asked the Manipur government to trace the abducted civilians and hand them over to their families within four days. "The Nagas shall be compelled to boycott the government collectively and may appeal to all (10) Naga legislators to withdraw their support (to the government)," it said.

# Karnataka has given the Congress a template to settle leadership feuds

NEWS ANALYSIS

**Sandeep Phukan**
NEW DELHI

The transition of leadership in Karnataka may have ended months of uncertainty, but it has once again put the spotlight on a problem the Congress has struggled to resolve: managing competing Chief Ministerial claimants.

The Karnataka decision could send a message to leaders in other States that the party leadership now has the appetite to take difficult calls to contain factional rivalries and settle leadership disputes.

In Punjab and Uttarakhand, which go to the polls next year, internal rivalries are already spilling out into the open. In Punjab, a three-cornered contest has emerged between Leader of Opposition (LoP) Partap Singh Bajwa, State Congress chief Amrinder Raja Warring and former Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi. A similar situation prevails in Uttarakhand, where the LoP in the Assembly, Pritam Singh, the State unit chief, Ganesh Godiyal, and former CM, Harish Rawat, are locked in a three-cornered contest.

Leadership tussles often emerge in States when leaders sense electoral opportunity, but the Congress's stated position has been to contest elections under collective leadership. It may well be a strategy to avoid internal sabotage by factions that lose out in the race. And on the few occasions when the party did announce a Chief Ministerial face, the results have not always been favourable – as in Punjab in 2012, when Captain Amarinder Singh was named the Chief Ministerial candidate, and more recently in Assam, where Gaurav Gogoi was projected as the party's face.

**Fresh direction:** Former Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah with Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Even as Indian elections are increasingly acquiring a presidential style, with campaigns centred around individual leaders, the Congress chooses to frame the leadership question as one to be decided by the newly elected legislators.

**The Kerala example**

In practice, however, the post-poll script is often different. The 10-day uncertainty over the choice for a Chief Minister in Kerala was a case in point.

By most accounts, a majority of the MLAs were said to be backing K.C. Venugopal, Lok Sabha member and general secretary (organisation) of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), even though he had not contested the State Assembly elections. At the same time, however, an equally strong narrative of public sentiment favouring V.D. Satheesan, now Kerala Chief Minister, also emerged, prompting newly elected legislators to adopt a one-line resolution authorising the high command to decide the leadership question.

The one-line resolution has been the Congress's preferred route in most cases, even though the ability of the central leadership to impose its choice on States is now on the wane.

**Internal factions**

The 2018 Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan illustrated the crisis.

In Madhya Pradesh, the choice was between State Congress chief Kamal Nath and campaign strategist Jyotiraditya Scindia; in Rajasthan, between veteran Ashok Gehlot and State chief Sachin Pilot; and in Chhattisgarh, between State chief Bhupesh Baghel and campaign committee head T.S. Singhdeo.

On December 13, 2018, the day Mr. Nath was named Chief Minister, Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, quoted Leo Tolstoy: "The two most powerful warriors are patience and time." But the approach did not sit well with Mr. Scindia, who later quit the party, forcing the collapse of the Kamal Nath government within 15 months.

In Chhattisgarh, a two-and-a-half-year rotational formula was discussed, though never made public. Despite prolonged talks, the high command failed to persuade Mr. Baghel to step down and he completed a full term. But the factionalism hurt the party and contributed to its defeat in the 2023 elections.

In Rajasthan, Mr. Pilot's failed rebellion against Mr. Gehlot led to his isolation, with factionalism once again costing the Congress politically.

Against this backdrop, the success of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Mr. Gandhi in persuading Mr. Siddaramaiah to step down may now provide the party a template to handle similar leadership disputes.

# Shivakumar's rise poses existential challenge for JD(S)

NEWS ANALYSIS

**Nistula Hebbar**
NEW DELHI

The change of guard in Karnataka's Congress-led government is emerging as an existential challenge for the Janata Dal (Secular), with some dramatic decisions, including a possible return to full-time State politics by Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, being contemplated by the party leadership.

For the JD(S), D.K. Shivakumar's likely elevation is seen as politically disadvantageous for Mr. Kumaraswamy, as both leaders belong to the Vokkaliga community and have been engaged in a decades-long contest for influence over the community, especially in the Old Mysore region.

**Voter shift**

Minority voters, who were earlier part of both the JD (S) and Congress vote banks, largely shifted to the Congress under former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's AHINDA combination of Backward Classes, minorities and Dalits, along with the JD(S)'s move to join the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The possible weakening of the JD(S) vote base comes at a time when the Assembly election in Karnataka is due in 2028.

Party sources said Mr. Kumaraswamy may, during the next reshuffle of the Union Cabinet, decide to forgo his ministerial berth in favour of his brother-in-law and Bangalore Rural MP C.N. Manjunath, who won on a BJP ticket.

"The next Assembly election will be an existential one anyway for the JD (S), but with Mr. Shivakumar as Chief Minister – a Vokkaliga rising to the top post after a long time – the challenge is greater. Kumaranna [Mr. Kumaraswamy] may yield his ministerial berth to Mr. Manjunath," a senior party source said.

**Land row**

Among the issues that the JD(S) leadership wants to foreground locally is the proposed large-scale land acquisition for the Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township near Bidadi in outer Bengaluru and Ramanagara, considered a stronghold of the Gowda family.

The Siddaramaiah Cabinet had approved the acquisition of 7,481 acres of land spanning nine villages, much of it belonging to small farmers.

It is increasingly clear that the political contest within the Congress between Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Shivakumar is beginning to reshape the wider political landscape in Karnataka, with implications for rival parties such as the JD(S).

# India-U.S. interim deal will be finalised over the 'next few weeks and months': Sergio Gor

**Kallol Bhattacherjee**
NEW DELHI

Presenting an optimistic picture of trade ties between India and the United States, U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor on Friday said that the two sides were expected to sign a trade deal "over the next few weeks and months". Delivering a speech at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mr. Gor said India was aligning with "trusted ecosystems and resilient supply chains".

U.S. Ambassador Sergio Gor. ANI

"Our current interim trade agreement is on the table for us to finalise and that will unlock prosperity for both of our countries... Next week, we will welcome a U.S. delegation here to continue those talks. We fully expect that the trade deal will be signed over the next few weeks and months," said Mr. Gor in his first speech following the visit of U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio to New Delhi earlier this week to participate in the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting.

Mr. Gor pointed out that in a little over two decades, bilateral trade had grown from $20 billion to $220 billion in goods and services and described this as an outcome of "deeper, broader engagement and stronger economic integration".

# SC sets 3-month deadline for High Courts to pronounce judgments after reserving orders

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday set a three-month deadline for High Courts to pronounce judgments after reserving orders in a case. A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, in its verdict issuing "binding guidelines", said the three-month countdown would begin from the date on which judgment is reserved. As of now, there are no specific timelines within which judges have to deliver judgments. The convention is that the judiciary ought to pronounce judgments within a reasonable time – from two to six months – after reserving judgement.

However, judges, including those in the Supreme Court and the High Courts, have in practice reserved judgments for well over a year.

The Bench, in its judgment on Friday, directed that bail orders must be ideally pronounced the next day, and communicated to jail authorities the same day. The court also ordered that undertrials granted bail should be released the same day or the next day at the latest.

The operative part of a judgment must be announced in court in cases of *habeas corpus* matters, criminal appeals resulting in acquittal, and matters relating to demolition, the court further directed. The reasons for such orders must be uploaded within a week, and High Court websites must reflect the date on which judgement is reserved, the SC ordered.

# PM's stance on Israel betrays India's values, says Congress

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of displaying "extreme moral cowardice" through his alleged support for Israel and said his position amounted to a "betrayal" of India's long-standing values and foreign policy principles.

The criticism came after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly remarked at a conference in the West Bank that Israel faced delegitimisation across the world "except in India".

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said Mr. Netanyahu's remark reflected the views of "Prime Minister Modi's ecosystem and not India as a whole".

"Mr. Modi has stood out as Mr. Netanyahu's strongest supporter. Israel is embedded in the Modani conglomerate. He has been demonstrating extreme moral cowardice, and his stance is a betrayal of all that India stands for…," the Congress leader said.

# Rahul questions Modi's silence on CBSE debacle

Opposition leader asks how TCS lost contract to COEMPT despite latter's poor track record; claims technical requirements for bid were relaxed; reiterates demand for independent judicial probe

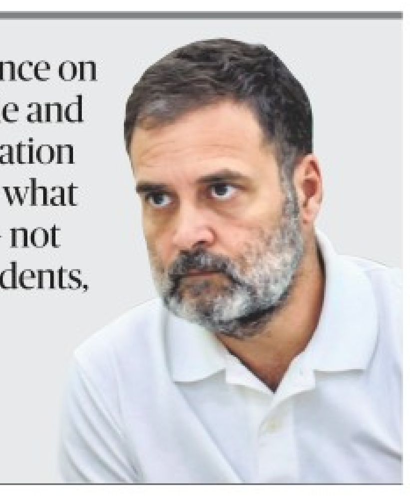
**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Friday questioned how Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), one of India's largest IT services companies, lost the Central Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) on-screen marking (OSM) contract to COEMPT Edutek, alleging that tender norms were diluted to favour the latter.

He also questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on the OSM controversy.

"… Modi*ji*, your silence on the CBSE debacle and inaction against the Education Minister tells the country what you actually care about – not the futures of lakhs of students, only the survival of your own government," Mr. Gandhi said in a post on X.

> Modi*ji*, your silence on the CBSE debacle and inaction against the Education Minister tells the country what you actually care about — not the futures of lakhs of students, only the survival of your own government
>
> **RAHUL GANDHI**
> Congress leader



Sharing a media report, Mr. Gandhi claimed that the CBSE had called for OSM tenders three times before awarding the contract to COEMPT. According to him, there were no bids in the first round and no qualified bidder in the second, following which technical requirements were progressively relaxed.

Mr Gandhi alleged that the scanning resolution requirement was reduced, the condition for robotic scanners removed, and the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) certification requirement lowered from Level 5 to Level 3. He further claimed that penalties for errors in answer-sheet scanning were also dropped.

"TCS, India's biggest IT services company, qualified in the third round too. TCS lost. COEMPT – a company with a spectacular track record of failure – won," he said.

Linking the tender process to complaints regarding the evaluation glitches, Mr. Gandhi said students had reported "badly scanned answer sheets, missing pages" and problems with the evaluation portal. He also claimed that teachers had warned the CBSE that the OSM system required one to two more years of preparation before nationwide implementation.

Questioning the government's explanation that "due process was followed", Mr. Gandhi said the issue was whether the contract had been "honestly awarded to the best company". "The futures of 18.5 lakh children were handed to a company that could only qualify after the rules were bent for it," he said.

He also responded to several Union Ministers, who claimed that Congress governments in Karnataka and Telangana used the services of COEMPT.

"To the BJP Ministers attacking me for asking questions–I have, from day one, demanded an independent judicial probe. Expand it from CBSE to every contract awarded to COEMPT. Our youth deserve the truth," he said.

# The Hindu Huddle to host eminent film personalities

**The Hindu Bureau**

The entertainment industry is going through one of its most challenging phases in recent years.

At a time when films are struggling at the box office week after week, the landscape of success is rapidly changing. Amid this uncertainty, a few actors are standing out through their talent, consistency, and the ability to connect with audiences across platforms and genres.

One such actor is Manoj Bajpayee. From the unforgettable Bhiku Mhatre in *Satya* to his portrayal of the relatable middle-class intelligence officer in *The Family Man*, Mr. Bajpayee has built a body of work that cuts across generations and formats.

Two women actors who are breaking the rules of the game are Huma Qureshi and Kritika Kamra. Ms. Qureshi has built a formidable space for herself with performance-driven roles, especially through the hugely acclaimed *Maharani*. Ms. Kamra has steadily evolved from television fame into an actor known for layered performances, earning appreciation for projects such as *The Great Shamsuddin Family* and, more recently, for playing a Parsi girl in *Matka King*.

SAMI-SABINSA GROUP Presents THE HINDU HUDDLE INDIA IN DIALOGUE
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At The Hindu Huddle in Bengaluru, film critic Rohit Khilnani will be in conversation with Ms. Qureshi and Ms. Kamra on June 5 and Mr. Bajpayee on June 6, discussing their remarkable journeys and the changing landscape of Indian entertainment.

The event is presented by the Sami-Sabinsa Group as the Presenting Partner. The event is co-powered by the Government of Telangana and held in association with Khaja Bandanawaz University. It is further supported by Bank of Baroda, Larsen & Toubro, Apollo Hospitals, IIM Sirmaur, ICFAI Group, TAFE, Wizzmoni, Associate Partners; Casagrand, Realty Partner; Toyota, Luxury Car partner; Amity University Bengaluru, University Partner; Harrow International School Bengaluru, Education Partner; Meghalaya Tourism, State Partner; and NDTV 24x7, TV Partner.

Readers can register for the event by scanning the QR code. Limited seats available.

# AAP dominates Punjab civic polls, wins 48% seats

**Vikas Vasudeva**
CHANDIGARH

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday won a majority of the seats in the civic body elections in Punjab, even as the Opposition parties alleged that the ruling dispensation had misused the government machinery to tilt the results in its favour.

According to the Punjab State Election Commission, of the 1,977 wards, the AAP won 954, the Congress 390, Independents 251, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) 191, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) 170, and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) seven, till the filing of this report.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said the AAP's victory in the polls was a decisive endorsement of his government's development-driven governance model.

"Punjabis have swept out the Congress, Shiromani Akali Dal and BJP," he added.

BJP leader and Union Minister of State for Railways and Food Processing, Ravneet Singh Bittu said the entire focus of the AAP was on defeating the BJP by any means.

"From canceling the nomination papers of BJP candidates to stuffing fake votes through ballot boxes, the government spared no effort in strangling democracy," he said.

AAP supporters in Amritsar celebrate the party's win across several seats in the Punjab civic body polls on Friday. ANI

# 'None will dare breach our borders once new security grid is in place'

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The government has decided to completely transform the country's border security arrangements, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday.

In the days to come, a quadrangular security grid will be established, under which the public, the civil administration, the local police, and the military will work alongside the Border Security Force to strengthen the borders, he said at the inauguration of two border outposts at Bhuj in Gujarat. A new concept of 'territorial security' will replace the traditional approach of mere border security, he said.

Under the Smart Border Security Project, efforts are under way to fortify the security grids along the borders. This endeavour involves an investment running into thousands of crores of rupees, he said. The Minister expressed the confidence that the deployment of drones, radars, watchtowers, state-of-the-art technology, and security personnel will result in the creation of a robust security grid. Once it is established, no one will dare breach the borders, he said.

He said the government is planning to assign additional areas of responsibility to the BSF. He noted that the most significant gap in the security grid lay in the incomplete fencing along the West Bengal boundary. Once the fencing is completed, the government will succeed in curbing infiltration, he said. Work on installing technological fencing is being expedited in forested regions and along riverine channels to prevent infiltration through these routes. In the days to come, the entire border will be secured.

After inaugurating the border outposts, Mr. Shah interacted with the BSF personnel. Praising the personnel, he said they live in harsh climatic and difficult conditions, enduring temperatures ranging from -45 degrees Celsius to 45 degrees Celsius.

Home Minister Amit Shah interacts with BSF personnel during high tea at a new border outpost in Bhuj on Friday. ANI

# No immediate relief to CJP over blocking of X handle

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday declined immediate relief to Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke over blocking of the party's X handle on national security grounds.

Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav said such relief could only be granted after hearing the government as the issue had far-reaching consequences.

The High Court issued notice to the Union government and posted the case for July 6.

The court said Mr. Dipke could approach the review committee set up under the IT Rules, via videoconferencing as he was abroad.


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PBX: 0172-5197847, 5197846

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

PSWC invites online tenders through GeM Portal for creation of 0.20 LMT godown capacities at 02 locations in the State of Punjab for guaranteed lease of 10 years on Build, Own and Operate/Lease basis for storage requirements of FCI under two bid system 'Technical Bid' and 'Financial Bid'.

NIT (alongwith GeM Bid IDs) is available on Department's website i.e. https://pswc.in

PSWC reserves the right to scrap the tender at any stage without assigning any reason and PSWC will not be held liable for any costs and consequences incurred by the intending bidders.

Note: Any corrigendum(s)/Notification(s) to this Notice Inviting E-Tender shall be published Department's website & GeM Portal.

1004/12/2026-27/11706 Managing Director, PSWC

**THE NEW INDIA ASSURANCE EMPLOYEES' CO-OPERATIVE THRIFT & CREDIT SOCIETY LTD. (Regd. No. X-413/1959 Dated: 18.08.1959; L-11015/19/73 Dated: 19.06.1974) (Multi State Co-operative Society)**
Regd. Office: No. 453, Anna Salai, Fathima Akhtar Court, Teynampet, Chennai - 600 018. Ph: 044-24364335, E-mail: niaecs1959@gmail.com, Web: niaectcs.com

**RE SCHEDULE OF ELECTION PROGRAMME**

**Present :: Tmt. Rashmi Siddharth Zagade, I.A.S.,**
District Collector / Returning Officer.

By virtue of the power vested with me as Returning Officer upon appointment by the Cooperative Election Authority vide their order Election No. 72/2025-26, dated : 11.07.2025, it is hereby notified that the **Election Reschedule Programme** to Elect 20 (Twenty) Board Members for the term 2026-2031 which will be held on 17th June, 2026 from polling as mentioned below schedule. All the members are requested to vote in the Election as per conditions laid down in MSCS Act 2002 (as Amended Act & Rules 2023) and Society Bye-Laws.

**ELECTION PROGRAMME**
**Attachment of the Order No. CEA-12011/287/2025, Dated: 13.05.2026 for conduct of Election and Corrigendum dated 26.05.2026.**

**(A) GENERAL INFORMATION**

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Multi State Co-operative Thrift and Credit Society | The New India Assurance Employees' Cooperative Thrift and Credit Society Limited, No. 453, Anna Salai, Fathima Akhtar Court, Teynampet, Chennai, Tamil Nadu – 600 018. Contact: 9543122701, E-mail: niaecs1959@gmail.com |
| Registered No. | X-413/1959 Dated 18.08.1959; L-11015/19/73 Dated 19.06.1974 |
| Returning Officer | District Magistrate / Collector, Chennai. Tmt. Rashmi Siddharth Zagade, I.A.S. |
| Post for which Election being held | Board Member-20 (General-17, SC/ST-1 & Women-2) Office Bearers-2 (Chairman-1 & Vice-Chairman-1) |
| Area of Operation | Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Goa & Pondicherry. |
| Regular Member | 1291 |
| Polling Booth | Chennai Registered Office, Madurai R.O., Coimbatore R.O., Ernakulam R.O., Vizag R.O., Bangalore R.O., Hyderabad R.O. |

**(B) REVISED ELECTION PROGRAMME FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

| Sl.No. | Particulars | Date | Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Date of Polling | 17th June, 2026 (Wednesday) | 8.00 AM to 04.00 PM and all those who have entered polling station at 04.00 PM or before should be allowed to cast vote. |
| 2. | Counting of votes | 20th June, 2026 (Saturday) | 8.00 AM at The New India Assurance Co. Ltd., LBO (710400) Fathima Akhtar Court, 2nd Floor (SIET Building), Teynampet, Chennai – 600 018. |
| 3. | Submission of Form 19M with recommendation for seeking approval of CEA before declaration of result of BOD | 22nd June, 2026 (Monday) | After the counting of votes |
| 4. | Declaration of Result of Board of Directors | On or before 25th June, 2026 (Thursday) | |

**(C) REVISED ELECTION PROGRAMME OF OFFICE BEARER**

| Sl.No. | Particulars | Date | Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. | Announcement of Election Schedule | 30th June, 2026 (Tuesday) | After Declaration of Result of Board Members' Election |
| | I. Time window for filing nomination | 09.30 AM to 11.30 AM | |
| | II. Scrutiny of nomination papers | 12.30 PM to 02.00 PM | |
| | III. Time and date for withdrawal | 02.00 PM to 04.00 PM | |
| | IV. Display of list of the contesting candidates and schedule of election | 04.00 PM | |
| 6. | Meeting of Newly Constituted Board & Publication of List for valid Nominations, Polling (if required) | 03rd July, 2026 (Friday) | 11.00 AM Onwards |
| 7. | Declaration of Result of Election of Office Bearers | On or before, 08.07.2026. | |

Revised Election Schedule notified pursuant to the order of Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Madras in the W.P. No. 206 of 2026, dated 21.04.2026 and directions of the CEA vide letter dated 05.02.2026 for resumption of the MSCS election.
Sd/- xxxx
**Place: Chennai - 18.** **Tmt. Rashmi Siddharth Zagade, I.A.S.,**
**Date: 26.05.2026** **DISTRICT COLLECTOR / RETURNING OFFICER**

**APPOINTMENT**

भारतीय समुद्री विश्वविद्यालय
**INDIAN MARITIME UNIVERSITY**
(A Central University under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India)
Established by an Act of the Parliament in 2008

**Advt. No. IMU-HQ/R/NT/2026/01** **Date: 30.05.2026**

**Recruitment of Campus Director (On Direct Recruitment / Deputation Basis)**

Applications are invited from Indian Nationals for the post of Campus Director on Direct Recruitment / Deputation basis in IMU. Interested candidates may submit their applications online through the link available at **https://www.imu.edu.in/imunew/recruitment.**

| Name of the Post | No. of Posts | Category | Pay Level (7th CPC pay matrix) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Campus Director | *02 Posts [including 01 anticipated vacancy]* | UR – 02 posts | Level-14 [Academic] under 7th CPC plus Special Allowance of Rs. 6,750/- per month. Other benefits and allowances are as per IMU norms. |

**Note:** The vacancies indicated are tentative in nature and IMU reserves the right to increase/decrease/cancel/withdraw any or all the vacancies at any time.

The Campus Director is the academic-cum-administrative head of the Campus. Apart from day-to-day administration and overall management of the Campus, the Campus Director is expected to:

- Provide leadership for long term development of the Campus in line with the Maritime India Vision 2030, Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, Vision of the University – IMU StARTS Plan 25 and NEP 2020.
- Contribute to create a thriving learning environment for students, faculty and staff. Strengthen academic, consulting and research activities in the Campus/University.
- Build and nurture alliances and partnerships with alumni and stakeholders in the maritime sector to enhance the academic standing of the University.

The vacancies stated above are tentative and are subject to change. IMU reserves the right not to fill up any of the posts advertised (or) cancel the recruitment at any stage.

**Important dates:**
Opening date for the submission of online application : 30.05.2026
Closing date for the submission of online application : 28.06.2026
Last date for receiving hard copies of the applications : 05.07.2026

Women candidates are encouraged to apply

**For further details regarding the eligibility criteria:** i.e., Age, Educational Qualifications, Experience, etc., please visit ***https://www.imu.edu.in/imunew/recruitment***

**Sd/-**
**Registrar**

## INBRIEF

### Vice-Admiral Kochhar takes charge as Vice-Chief of Navy

Vice-Admiral Ajay Kochhar (left), who spearheaded high-level naval combat readiness during Operation Sindoor, assumed charge as the 48th Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff on Friday, marking a significant milestone in a distinguished naval career spanning more than 37 years. Upon assuming office, the Flag Officer paid tribute to the nation's fallen heroes by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial in New Delhi. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Pune, and a specialist in gunnery and missile systems, Vice-Admiral Kochhar was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1988. Over the decades, he has held several key command positions.

### 8 lion cubs die of suspected Babesia infection in Gujarat

The Gujarat Forest Department has intensified disease-control measures in and around the Gir landscape after eight lion cubs died of suspected Babesia infection in Gir Somnath and Amreli districts. Authorities have isolated lions within a 10-km radius of the affected areas and launched large-scale tick-removal operations. Babesia is a parasitic disease transmitted through ticks and can cause weakness, fever, coughing, and nasal discharge in infected animals. Officials said the infection is being treated as a potential threat because of the possibility of rapid transmission among lions in the open forest and adjoining revenue areas.

### Twisha death case: Samarth, Giribala sent to CBI custody

A court in Bhopal on Friday sent Twisha Sharma's husband, Samarth Singh, and her mother-in-law, retired judge Giribala Singh, to five-day CBI custody, a day after the latter was arrested in connection with the 33-year-old model's death and dowry harassment case. The CBI produced the two accused before the court of Justice Shobhana Bhalawe, seeking their custody for interrogation. The court granted the agency custody till June 2. Earlier, the two were taken for their medical examinations. The CBI now plans to question the two in detail and verify their claims, especially about the events leading to Twisha's death.

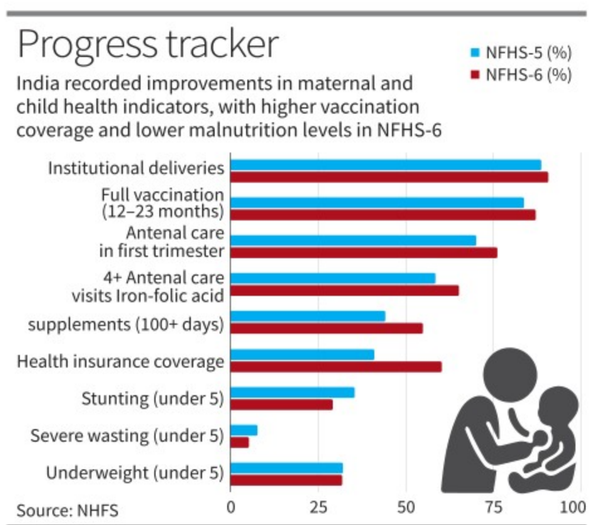
### Phogat can take part in Asian Games selection trials, says SC

The Supreme Court on Friday allowed wrestler Vinesh Phogat to participate in the Asian Games 2026 selection trials to be held on May 30. The court said Ms. Phogat needs a chance as she has made the country proud multiple times in the past in the wrestling ring. The court passed the order in response to the petition filed by the Wrestling Federation of India challenging the Delhi High Court order giving nod to her participation in the Asian Games trials. The WFI argued that she had missed trials and her whereabouts had not been known. Ms. Phogat had responded that she had become a mother and was also engaged in her duties as an MLA.

# 90% of Indian babies are born in hospitals: NFHS-6

Survey records sharp rise in caesarean section, drop in stunting and severe wasting among young children, improvements in services such as antenatal care and nutrition for pregnant women

**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**
NEW DELHI




India made significant progress in maternal and child health, with improvements in vaccination and hospital births, and a drop in stunting and severe wasting among young children, according to the National Family Health Survey-6, for which field work was conducted in 2023 and 2024.

The Health Ministry released data from the survey on Friday. It showed that institutional deliveries rose from 88.6% in the previous round of the NFHS conducted between 2019 and 2021, to 90.6% this time, while 95.6% of infants under six months were being breastfed during the survey period.

The survey, which is the first to be conducted after the COVID-19 pandemic, recorded improvements in child health indicators.

Stunting among children under five years declined from 35.5% to 29.3%, severe wasting dropped from 7.7% to 5.2%, and the percentage of underweight children in this age group slipped marginally from 32.1% to 31.8%. Symptoms of acute respiratory infection among children fell from 2.8% to 1.9%, while the prevalence of severe diarrhoea also dropped to 0.5%.

The survey flagged the increase in non-communicable diseases, lifestyle-related risks, and the dual burden of undernutrition and increasing obesity among adults as persistent health challenges.

India's total fertility rate held steady at 2.0 in 2023-24, just under the replacement threshold of 2.1%, while the contraceptive prevalence rate rose from 66.7% to 69.1%.

The survey highlights progress in maternal health services across the country, with 95.9% of pregnant women receiving antenatal care, including 76.2% in the first trimester, an increase from 70% in the previous survey period.

Mothers receiving at least four antenatal care visits also increased from 58.5% to 65.2%. Maternal nutrition indicators also showed improvement, with mothers consuming iron-folic acid supplements for 100 days or more during pregnancy rising from 44.1% to 54.9%, while those consuming supplements for 180 days or more rose from 26% to 37.8%.

However, it found that caesarean section deliveries had increased sharply from 21.5% to 27.2%, with substantially higher rates in several States and in private healthcare facilities. In urban areas, the rate of caesarean sections stood at 40%, far exceeding the World Health Organization optimal threshold of 10%-15%.

Conducted by the Health Ministry along with the International Institute for Population Sciences, the survey documented progress towards universal immunisation coverage.

**Improved vaccination**

Based on vaccination cards, full vaccination coverage among children aged 12-23 months rose from 83.8% to 87.1%, with 95.6% of children getting most of their vaccinations through public health facilities. Among major vaccines, rotavirus vaccination coverage rose substantially, from 36.4% to 85.4%. The coverage of the second dose of measles-containing vaccines also increased significantly from 58.6% to 71.8%.

The survey found that the use of hygienic methods of menstrual protection among women aged 15-24 years has increased from 77.6% to 79.2%.

Bereaved family members mourn after spurious liquor claimed 15 lives in Pune district on Friday. PTI

# Spurious liquor kills 15 in Maharashtra; 8 held, probe ordered

**Chinmay Gaikwad**
MUMBAI

At least 15 people have died in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad in Maharashtra over the past three days after consuming spurious liquor, the police said on Friday. Eight people have been arrested, including the main accused, Colonel Virkha Singh.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis directed the police commissioners of both cities to conduct a coordinated probe and find the cause of the deaths, vowing to punish the accused.

Opposition leaders have alleged a failure in law enforcement, with Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar) MLA Rohit Pawar vandalising a liquor store in protest and accusing the police of a cover-up to protect a "big fish".

Preliminary investigations found that a person named Yogesh Wankhede brought ethanol from Mumbai without permission and mixed it to prepare the spurious liquor at a location in Hadapsar and then supplied it to four vendors operating in the Dapodi, Hadapsar, and Chatushrungi areas.

The first five deaths occurred on May 27, seven on Thursday, and three on Friday morning. Some patients are undergoing treatment in hospitals.

Deaths have been reported from Dapodi, Phugewadi, Hadapsar, and Kalepadal.

The police said more arrests are likely soon. The Excise Department has joined the investigation and searches were conducted at multiple liquor shops.

# SC issues guidelines for protecting survivors of human trafficking

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday issued comprehensive guidelines for the government and competent authorities to protect young women from trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation (CSE).

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan said the judgment in the case, pending for over 22 years in the apex court, was "close to our hearts".

The court gave detailed guidelines on establishing a uniform victim protection protocol for survivors of CSE. The court said trafficking was an affront to constitutional dignity.

"We have tried to do our best," Justice Pardiwala said.

The short pronouncement in the courtroom saw Justice Mahadevan appreciate the long representation of senior advocate Aparna Bhat in the matter.

"History will long remember your efforts in this case," Justice Mahadevan addressed Ms. Bhat.

The petition highlighting the lack of laws and protective mechanism for young girls trafficked into prostitution was filed by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Prajwala in 2004.

# SC gives in-service teachers one more year to clear TET

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI

**The original deadline was August 31, 2027. It has now been extended to August 31, 2028**

The Supreme Court on Friday gave teachers who are currently in-service an extension of one more year to pass the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET), taking into consideration the importance of ensuring continuity in the elementary education of children.

The original deadline for teachers to obtain the TET qualification was August 31, 2027, and has now been extended to August 31, 2028.

The limited relief for in-service teachers without TET qualification came in a series of petitions to review a September 1, 2025 judgment which had set the original deadline.

The court further directed States and competent authorities to conduct the TET periodically, preferably twice every year, interspersed with an approximate period of six months between successive examinations, to allow eligible teachers a reasonable opportunity to comply with the statutory requirement.

**No more extension**

The court made it "abundantly clear" that it would not entertain any more pleas from in-service teachers for any further extension of time to gain the TET qualification.

Justice Dipankar Datta, who authored the judgment, noted that more than one-and-a-half decades have passed since the Right to Education (RTE) Act had prescribed the TET qualification for teachers.

"The period of 15 years could be considered more than sufficient time for a teacher to acquire the TET qualification," Justice Datta said.

Rejecting the plea that a continued insistence on TET would push several thousand teachers out of service, the top court said that allowing unqualified educators to continue in their jobs would impact the educational future of generations to come.

"The RTE Act is a child-centric legislation and must be read so. Service of teachers cannot come at the cost of the educational future of the children," Justice Datta reasoned.

### 6 dead as slab of unfinished bridge falls on them in U.P.

**The Hindu Bureau**
LUCKNOW

Six workers were killed and three injured after a section of an under-construction bridge collapsed during a storm in Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh on Thursday night.

The bridge is being built over the Betwa river. The incident took place when the workers were engaged in construction activity. A group of labourers were taking shelter underneath the slab which collapsed.

The Additional Superintendent of Police of Hamirpur, Arvind Kumar Verma, said rescue operation was initiated after receiving the information.

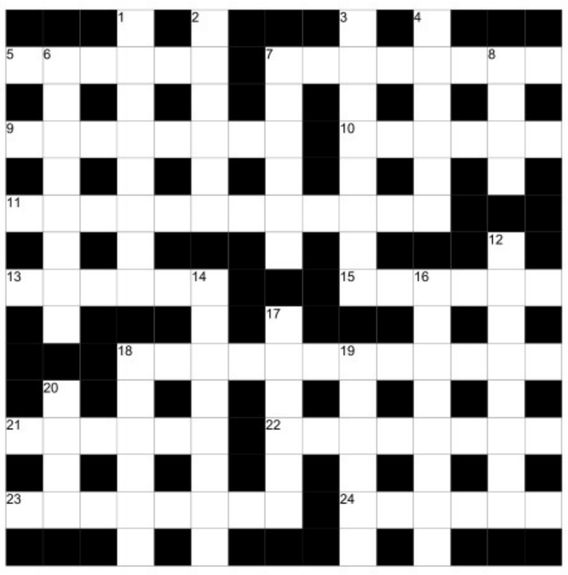
Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the incident.

## TH CROSSWORD + 14807

(set by Mythical)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at *https://thehindu.com/crosswords*

SCAN TO PLAY



**ACROSS**

5. Big lizard in car stolen from Nicaragua possibly (6)
7. Teasing graduate joining a company suppressing noise (8)
9. Kelvin getting casual winter attire, primarily woollens (8)
10. Chief broadcast German songs (6)
11. Quietly envy a model making a comeback, leading show (12)
13. Office furniture (6)
15. Stands and comforts student going inside (6)
18. Readers dressed in South American headgear in a very hot place (6,6)
21. Aquatic bird protecting a fledgling ultimately in shallow lake (6)
22. Abstract work by sibling reportedly to offend in the beginning (8)
23. Spooner's at liberty to change plant (4-4)
24. Idle daughter vacates cabin for one from France (6)

**DOWN**

1. State showing tackiness (3,5)
2. Local model say, introduces nationalist (6)
3. Working out deal with adviser somewhere Down Under (8)
4. Trainee put in jail! (6)
6. Liberal surgeon collapsed after consuming ecstasy (8)
7. One serving drinks and nuts mostly to a partner (6)
8. Dull guests really exasperate you initially (4)
12. Leading on, lift ring casually (8)
14. This crazy patrol's actively hunting leopards (8)
16. They say weakling upset legendary Greek king (8)
17. Extremely poor lad possesses one cooler (6)
18. Tool for digging in small shack (6)
19. Hang leader of dacoits alongside crook (6)
20. Frequently, software is free or reasonable (4)

## SUDOKU

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| 5 | | | 2 | 3 | | | 4 | 1 |
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| 7 | 9 | | | 2 | 3 | | | 8 |
| | | | 9 | 8 | | 1 | | |
| | 4 | 8 | 6 | 7 | | | | |

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

**Solution to previous puzzle**

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 7 |
| 8 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| 4 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 8 |
| 1 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 9 |
| 6 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 5 |
| 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 2 |

## FAITH

### Nammazhwar, the great

Nammazhwar was a prominent saint in the Vaishnavite tradition and had a special connection with Vishnu temple traditions, said Sri Anantha Padmanabhachariar in a discourse. Vaikasi Visagam, the *thirunakshatram* or birth star of Nammazhwar, is an important festival for Vaishnavites. Sri Swaminatha Iyer, lovingly known as *Tamil Thatha*, mentioned in his autobiography, "*Nilavil Malarnda Mullai*", that he received the blessings of Nammazhwar when he discovered the ancient palm-leaf manuscripts of *Pathupattu* and *Ettuthogai*. He referred to Nammazhwar as *Tamil Kadavul*, meaning the God of Tamil.

Nammazhwar was born in Azhwar Tirunagari in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. He is considered one of the most important Azhwars because he holds the position of an Acharya, which is regarded as equal to God in the Vaishnavite tradition. His works, especially *Thiruvaimozhi*, are believed to summarise the essence of the four Vedas: Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharvana. The *Satari* (the crown-like object) is placed on devotees' heads in Vishnu temples, symbolising the Lord's feet, and Nammazhwar is considered the personification of those divine feet. He is also known as *Satakopan*. According to legend, while he was still in the womb, a force called "*Satam*", symbolising ignorance, tried to influence him, but he conquered it. Nammazhwar is closely associated with the sacred tamarind tree at Azhwar Tirunagari, where he is believed to have performed penance for many years without eating or speaking. It is also believed that visiting and praying near this tamarind tree can help children facing developmental or mental challenges.

## INBRIEF

### IndiGo posts ₹2,537 crore loss in Q4 on forex impact

IndiGo on Friday reported a loss of ₹2,536.9 crore in the March quarter due to multiple headwinds, including challenging operating conditions and rupee depreciation. The country's largest airline had a profit of ₹3,067.5 crore in the year-ago period. For the 2025-26 fiscal, the carrier posted a net loss of ₹2,393.6 crore, but excluding the impact of foreign exchange and exceptional items, it would have been a profit of ₹7,502.5 crore, it said. PTI

### Rupee rises 73 paise to close at 94.85 against U.S. dollar

The rupee appreciated 73 paise to close at 94.85 against the U.S. dollar in early trade on Friday, as renewed optimism over the peace deal between the U.S. and Iran boosted market sentiments. Forex traders said the USD/INR pair appreciated on an overnight decline in crude prices and a fall in the U.S. dollar, after the U.S. and Iran reached an understanding to extend the ceasefire for another 60 days. On Wednesday, the rupee settled higher at 95.58 against the U.S. dollar. PTI

### NMDC Q4 net rises 35% to ₹2,020 cr. on higher revenue

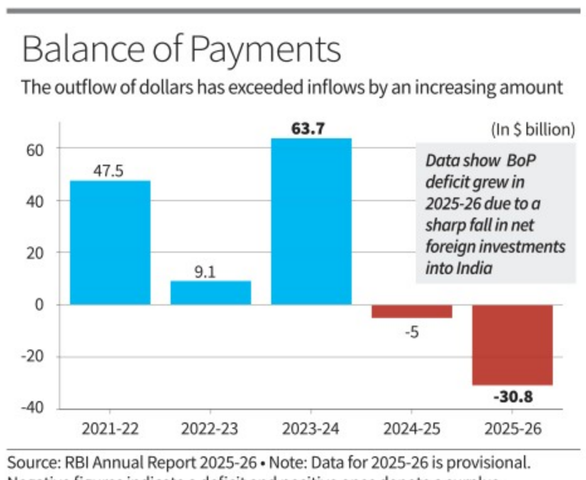
State-owned miner NMDC reported standalone net profit rose 35% for the March quarter to ₹2,020.13 crore compared with ₹1,496.16 crore a year earlier as total income increased 55%. Total income stood at ₹11,600.93 crore (₹7,443.91 crore). For FY26, the net profit increased 10% to ₹7,421.24 crore (₹6,692.60 crore) on a 30.71% rise in total income to ₹33,016.71 crore (₹25,258.56 crore). The board recommended a final dividend of ₹1 per share (face value of ₹1 each) for 2025-26.

# RBI data shows why govt. is concerned about dollars flowing out

India's Balance of Payments stood at a deficit of $30.8 bn in 2025-26, indicating that total outflows including trade and investments exceeded inflows six fold over the previous year

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**
NEW DELHI

The latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shows why the government and the central bank are so concerned about dollars flowing out of the country: the total amount of dollars flowing out of the country exceeded inflows by $30.8 billion in 2025-26, a more than six-fold increase over 2024-25. This Balance of Payments (BoP) had been a surplus as recently as 2023-24.




Source: RBI Annual Report 2025-26 • Note: Data for 2025-26 is provisional. Negative figures indicate a deficit and positive ones denote a surplus.

The data in the RBI's annual report for 2025-26, released on Friday shows that the BoP deficit grew in 2025-26 because of a sharp fall in net foreign investments into India, which compounded a widening trade deficit. The data for 2025-26 is up to December 31. Further, the deficit in 2025-26 was entirely paid for using the RBI's foreign exchange reserves, denting them significantly.

The overall Balance of Payments is a combination of the current account and the capital account.

The current account captures India's trade in goods and services as well as some cross-border financial transactions.

The capital account largely deals with investments, both direct and portfolio, external borrowings, external assistance, and asset transfers.

India generally runs a current account deficit (CAD) since it imports more than it exports. Over the last five years, this CAD has varied significantly, but came in at a three-year high of $30.2 billion 2025-26. India's overall merchandise trade deficit – the amount that imports exceeded exports – stood $251.6 billion in 2025-26, down from $286.9 billion in the previous year.

On the other hand, the surplus on India's 'invisibles' trade, which includes the services trade, fell to $221.4 billion in 2025-26 from $263.9 in 2024-25.

In other words, the services surplus shrank more than the merchandise deficit did, meaning that the overall current account saw its deficit widen.

**Capital concerns**

In 2023-24, when India had a BoP surplus, this was because the surplus on the capital account was so big, it dwarfed the CAD. That is, the CAD was $26.1 billion in 2023-24, but the capital account surplus was $89.4 billion. As a result, the BoP surplus was $63.7 billion.

This scenario did not play out in 2025-26. The capital account surplus that year shrank to $72 million, down more than 99.5% over the $16.6 billion seen in 2024-25.

The big reasons for this seems to have been Indians parking their funds abroad and payments related to trade, even though the financial year 2025-26 included just one month of the ongoing crisis in West Asia. The 'other capital' heading, which includes delayed export receipts, advance payments for imports, and net funds held abroad, stood at a deficit of $22.6 billion in 2025-26, up from a deficit of $7.4 billion in the previous year.

The other factor driving the capital account deficit was the outflow of foreign portfolio investments. According to the data, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulled out $4.3 billion more in 2025-26 than they put in. This reversed the trend of the previous two years where FPI inflows exceeded outflows.

All of this data provides the backdrop for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's exhortation earlier this month for Indians to reduce their fuel consumption and gold purchases. India imports nearly 90% of its oil requirement, and does not produce any gold of its own, although its gold demand is very big.

As a result, a large part of the dollar outflows go in paying for oil and gold imports. The government earlier this month also hiked the import duty on gold and silver to 15% from the previous 6%, and also restricted the import of most kinds of silver.

# Indian economy to remain resilient despite war impact

**Lalatendu Mishra**
MUMBAI

**'The adverse impact of the conflict is reflected in forecasts of global growth and inflation'**

The domestic economy in 2026-27 is expected to remain resilient, despite a challenging external environment characterised by elevated energy and commodity prices, rising logistics costs, volatility in global financial markets, and uncertainties surrounding global trade policies, the RBI said in its Annual Report 2025-26 released on Friday.

"Growth prospects are supported by India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals, including robust domestic demand, relatively lower dependence on exports as a growth driver, and a stable policy environment," the RBI emphasised.

On the global economy, RBI said geopolitical risk has re-emerged as the dominant drag on global growth in 2026.

The adverse impact of the outbreak of the conflict in West Asia at the end of February 2026 is reflected in forecasts of global growth and inflation.

In the IMF's baseline scenario, the global economy is projected to grow by 3.1% in 2026 (as against the earlier projection of 3.3% in January 2026), while global merchandise and services trade volume is expected to decelerate to 2.8% in 2026, it said.

# SC sets aside 'fraud' findings in 2007 RPL Futures Trading case

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday provided relief to Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) by overturning findings of fraud arrived at by Securities and Exchange Board (SEBI) in connection with Reliance Petroleum Ltd. futures trading of November 2007. The court also set aside the market regulator's direction to RIL to disgorge ₹447 crore.

A Bench led by Justice J.B. Pardiwala, in a judgment, concluded that the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) committed an "egregious error" in its finding of fraud against RIL under the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices relating to Securities Market) Regulations or the SEBI (PFUTP) Regulations.

# 'OMCs asked to have 30-day LPG stock'

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

Sujata Sharma

State-owned oil-marketing companies (OMCs) have been asked to maintain reserve of liquified petroleum gas (LPG) to meet a minimum of 30 days of demand, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary, Union Petroleum Ministry told reporters at the bi-weekly briefing about the situation in West Asia here on Friday.

"Oil-marketing companies have been asked to work out [such that] they have a minimum of 30 days for reserves for LPG, and they are working on it," she informed, adding that the OMCs have also been directed to expand the same for crude oil as well.

Ms. Sharma also told reporters that the demand for the bottled hydrocarbon gas presently stands at about 72,000 metric tonne (MT)/ per day with about 50-52,000 MT/per day being produced domestically.

"The demand for LPG is also impacted by seasonal variations," she stated,

"After demand management [steps] by the government and also because of the impact of the season, right now the demand is around 72,0000 MT/a day and we are producing 50-52,000 MT/ a day in our domestic refineries."

# Nifty50 slips 1.5% on MSCI index rejig

**Ashokamithran T.**
MUMBAI

**'The rebalancing is likely to have led to almost $800 mn to $1 billion in foreign investment outflow'**

Foreign investors sold Indian stocks after MSCI, the financial services giant whose indices serve as benchmark for global investors, replaced four major stocks with five others in the index pulling Nifty 50 by 1.5% and BSE Sensex by 1.4% on Friday.

MSCI said Hyundai Motors, Kalyan Jewellers India, Rail Vikas Nigam and SBI Cards and Payment would be removed from the India Domestic Index and replaced by Adani Energy Solutions, Federal Bank, Hitachi Energy India, Multi Commodity Exchange of India and National Aluminium Co.

Nifty50 opened at 23,902.15 and moved 100 points up to cross 24,000 by noon before sliding to the day's low of 23,484.75 and recovering to 23,547.75 at close.

**'Huge forex outflow'**

The rebalancing is expected to have led to an almost $800 million to $1 billion in foreign investment outflow, said U.R. Bhat, a veteran investor and co-founder of Alphaniti Fintech.

Further, he said this was a large amount of outflow in a session and the rest of the retail investors who may not have known about the rebalancing exercise might have sold putting further downward pressure on the market.

# SEBI slaps ₹28.6 crore penalty on Suzlon Energy for 'accounting fraud'

**Ashokamithran T.**
MUMBAI

SEL used misreported accounts to raise ₹1,800 crore.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) penalised Suzlon Energy Ltd. (SEL) and its top brass ₹28.6 crore for 'inflating the firm's net worth via circular transactions and misleading investors.'

As per the order, SEL sold its OMS (operations and maintenance services) unit worth ₹77.08 crore to one of its subsidiaries SGSL (a wholly-owned subsidiary of SEL) on a slump-sale basis for a lump-sum consideration of ₹2,000 crore in March 2014. The gain on the sale aggregating to ₹1,922.92 crore had been shown under exceptional items in FY2013-14.

This was done in different layers; first a payment of ₹700 crore was made through bank accounts.

Then, the balance ₹1,300 crore was further divided into two payments of ₹900 crore and ₹400 crore respectively. The ₹900 crore was recorded as ₹150 crore six times and the rest as four records of ₹100 crore each. These 'false records misstated the revenue and turnover.

**Negative net worth**

"Had this slump sale not been done, its net worth would have gone down to a negative ₹3,555.92 crore in FY 14-15," said Sandip Pradhan Whole Time Member , in the order.

SEL used the misreported accounts to raise equity capital of ₹1,800 crore from Mr. Dilip Shanghvi Family & Associates and availed loan restructuring from banks for ₹393 crore.

SEBI found Suzlon and key top executives Vinod. R.Tanti, Girish.R.Tanti, Kirti.J.Vagadia and Amit Agarwal in violation of Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices, and listing and disclosure rules and accordingly penalised them. SEBI ordered them to pay the penalty within 45 days of the receipt of the order.

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**CAPE CANAVERAL**

## New Glenn, Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin rocket, explodes on launch pad

REUTERS

Blue Origin's New Glenn rocket unleashed a massive fireball into the sky as it exploded during a test on Thursday, in the latest blow to billionaire Jeff Bezos's space ambitions. Blue Origin said on X that the rocket experienced an "anomaly" during the test in Cape Canaveral, and that "all personnel have been accounted for". AFP

**LIMASSOL**

## EU envoy seeks more vessels to secure traffic in Strait of Hormuz

REUTERS

The European Union's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on Thursday that securing freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz after the Iran war ends will require more ships. The EU mission in the Red Sea — dubbed Aspides — is comprised of three vessels that protect shipping from attacks by Houthi rebels. AP

**GUATEMALA CITY**

## Guatemala govt. denies agreeing to joint U.S. strikes on drug traffickers

AFP

Guatemala denied on Thursday reports it had agreed to joint strikes with the United States on drug traffickers in the country, but admitted it requested Washington's help in its fight against cartels. It added that "there is no agreement authorising foreign military operations by any country within national territory". AFP

**NAIROBI**

## Kenyan police arrest 8 students on suspicion of arson after school fire

AFP

Kenyan police arrested eight female students on suspicion of arson, authorities said on Friday, after a fire destroyed a dormitory at a boarding school, killing 16 children and injuring dozens of others. The motive remains under investigation. The girls were arrested for planning and carrying out a suspected arson attack. AP

# Russian drone targeting Ukraine crashes in Romania, injuring two

The NATO member scrambled two F-16 jets and a helicopter that were authorised to engage targets; President Nicusor Dan, who has convened a meeting of NATO's top defence body, says, 'We will have proportional measures in relation to Russia'

**Associated Press**
BUCHAREST

A Russian drone that was part of an overnight attack on Ukraine and then went astray slammed into an apartment building in eastern Romania, injuring two people in the NATO member country, Romanian authorities said, adding to concerns that the war could spread across the alliance's borders.

The Russian drone was tracked by radar in Romanian airspace and crashed onto the roof of the building in the city of Galati, Romania's Defence Ministry said in a statement. The impact was followed by a fire. The two people suffered minor injuries, and several others were evacuated.

**Serious violation**

The Romanian military scrambled two F-16 fighter jets and a helicopter that were authorised to engage targets, and alert messages were sent to residents of the affected areas. But the aircraft didn't engage or shoot at the drone to bring it down. Romania asked NATO for a faster transfer of anti-drone capabilities to its military, the Foreign Ministry said, calling the drone's flight a serious violation of international law.

Romanian law enforcement officers work on the site of a drone hit at a residential block of flats in Galati on Friday. REUTERS

The incursion was the latest in a litany of drone incidents – from both Russia and Ukraine – to afflict NATO member states and leave the 32-member transatlantic organisation on edge, drawing strong condemnation from Romania's allies.

In response to the latest incursion, Romanian President Nicusor Dan convened the NATO member's top defence body for a meeting on Friday to discuss the implications of what he called "the worst incident to hit the national territory" since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine.

"We will have proportional measures in relation to the Russian Federation. ... There is no ambiguity about the author and the cause of this assault," he wrote in a post on Facebook.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that it was too early to say that the drone which crashed in Romania was Russian.

# Trump says he's making final decision on Iran deal

**Agence France-Presse**
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that he was making his decision on a potential deal with Iran, though Tehran insisted there was still "no final agreement" on ending the West Asia war.

A report from Iran's *Fars* news agency also rebutted several key elements of Mr. Trump's characterisation of the deal, citing informed sources as calling his remarks a "mixture of truth and lies".

U.S. sources had told said that the deal was just waiting on Mr. Trump's sign-off following weeks of halting negotiations to end a conflict that had engulfed the West Asia and shaken the global economy.

Donald Trump

"I will be meeting now, in the Situation Room, to make a final determination," Mr. Trump said in a lengthy social media post, reiterating long-held demands that Iran agree never to have nuclear weapons and must open the vital Strait of Hormuz shipping lane.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei, however, told state media that the Islamic republic "said goodbye to the language of 'must' 47 years ago".

"Regarding the understanding... exchanges of messages are continuing, but no final agreement has been reached yet," he added.

In his post, Mr. Trump said Tehran would remove mines in the Strait of Hormuz and end its blockade of the waterway with "no tolls", while the U.S. would lift its parallel blockade of Iranian ports, and the two countries would coordinate on removing and destroying Iran's enriched uranium.

He also said "no money will be exchanged, until further notice".

Mr. Baqaei also told state TV that there were currently "no negotiations" taking place on Iran's nuclear programme.

# Japan-Philippines sea border neotiations 'illegal', says China

**Agence France-Presse**
BEIJING

China expressed strong opposition on Friday to a decision by Japan and the Philippines to start maritime border negotiations, calling the talks "illegal" and claiming exclusive control over the waters concerned.

The two island nations announced on Thursday they would start formal talks "to delimit the maritime boundary" of an economic zone and continental shelf between them, as Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos met Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on a visit to Tokyo.

But Beijing again asserted on Friday that it has an "exclusive economic zone and continental shelf" in the waters to the east of Taiwan.

Mao Ning

"China is strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to this," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a regular news conference .

# 15 children killed, 62 injured in Lebanon in last 7 days, says UN

**Agence France-Presse**
GENEVA

Fifteen children have been killed in Lebanon and 62 injured over the last seven days, the United Nations said on Friday, despite the ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah.

UNICEF, the UN children's agency, called the figures "staggering" and stressed that under international humanitarian law, children had to be protected at all times during conflict.

"According to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, 77 children have reportedly been killed or injured over the past week alone," UNICEF spokesperson Ricardo Pires told a media briefing in Geneva.

"Fifteen children killed and 62 injured in seven days. That's an average of 11 children every 24 hours. We understand the vast majority of these children were impacted by air strikes in south Lebanon. Only yesterday, seven children were killed and 30 injured," he said.

Mr. Pires called for all parties to respect the ceasefire in full and to comply at all times with international humanitarian law, under which "children and civilian infrastructure must be protected at all times".

Israel has issued repeated evacuation warnings to coastal city of Tyre.

# China is building launch pads near its nuclear missile silos in remote desert

**Reuters**

In a remote Chinese desert, a vast military complex is taking shape that some security scholars say appears built to ensure no American first strike on China's nuclear arsenal could reliably knock out Beijing's ability to hit back.

China's nuclear missiles can already reach any city in the United States. Now, satellite images show Beijing is building a sprawling web of launch pads, bunkers and communications nodes near the isolated nuclear silos that hold the Chinese military's longest-range missiles.

The images reveal more than 80 pads for possible use by China's expanding fleet of mobile missile launchers and air-defence batteries. They also show facilities that may serve electronic warfare, satellite communications and command operations, according to three security analysts, who assessed the imagery for Reuters.

An image of a launch pad, part of two isolated desert networks linked by roads, in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. REUTERS

The scale of the construction, which hasn't been previously reported, points to a sweeping expansion of hardened infrastructure designed to protect and operate China's land-based nuclear forces. Taken together, the network signals a significant upgrade in Beijing's efforts to ensure second-strike capability, underscoring intensifying nuclear competition with the United States as tensions rise over issues such as Taiwan's sovereignty.

"Taken together, I think there is a real possibility that the octagonal structures and the strange towers are linked to C3 – command, control, and communications – as well as maintenance and storage activities related to China's nuclear operations at the Hami ICBM silo site," said Tong Zhao, a senior fellow in nuclear policy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

**RECORD SPEED**

## Sooryavanshi reaches four-figure mark in the fewest deliveries

R.V. MOORTHY

Sooryavanshi became the fastest (balls faced) to reach the 1000-run milestone in the IPL. The 15-year-old took just 440 deliveries, eclipsing Andre Russell's record (545). By innings, the left-hander was the second-fastest (23) to the mark, level with Lendl Simmons and behind only Shaun Marsh (21).

**GAFFE**

## Don't think referee heard Parag's call: GT skipper Gill on toss retake

R.V. MOORTHY

GT captain Shubman Gill was disappointed that the toss had to be retaken ahead of IPL Qualifier 2 against RR. "We would have batted first. Forty overs have already been played on this pitch, and we did not think that it would change much. But unfortunately, I do not think the match referee heard the call from Riyan Parag," said Gill.

**STRICT MONITORING**

## BCCI bans smart sunglasses in Players and Match Officials Area

PTI

The BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit has barred the usage of smart sunglasses by players and match officials for the remainder of IPL 2026. The Board cited the features, which allow live streaming and video calling, for the ban. The possession or use of 'Smart Goggles' is strictly prohibited within the Players and Match Officials Area.

**MOVING ON**

## Pant requests to be relieved of captaincy, LSG obliges

FILE PHOTO: SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Rishabh Pant has been relieved of Lucknow Super Giants' captaincy after a disastrous 2026 IPL season. "LSG wishes to formally announce that Rishabh Pant has requested to be relieved of his captaincy duties with the franchise, and the franchisee has accepted his request with immediate effect," LSG said on Friday.

# Gill masterclass guides Titans past Royals into final

The skipper puts on 167 with Sai Sudharsan to make short work of the 215-run target; Sooryavanshi gem goes in vain as the Gujarat side makes it to the summit clash for the third time in five seasons

IPL-19

**Vivek Krishnan**
NEW CHANDIGARH

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, all of 15, will sparkle in the Indian Premier League for long. Certain as that appears after a 776-run season, the final of IPL 2026 in Ahmedabad on Sunday will not have his precocious presence. It is for no fault of his, for the prodigy smashed a 47-ball 96 (8x4, 7x6) to propel Rajasthan Royals to 214 for six against Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2 at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh Stadium here on Friday.

But in a contest pitted as Titans' collective strength versus RR's individual brilliance, the opening pair of Sai Sudharsan (58, 32b, 8x4, 1x6) and skipper Shubman Gill (104, 53b, 15x4, 3x6) reiterated that there are many paths to excellence. Both openers cut, drove and pulled with old-school finesse on their way to a stand of 167.

**Riposte:** Gill's regal knock meant Titans won at a canter after Sooryavanshi shone bright yet again. R.V. MOORTHY

### Repeat contest

It sealed a seven-wicket victory for Titans, who will now play Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the summit clash in a repeat of Qualifier 1. It is their third final in five seasons.

The opening alliance ended in rather unfortunate fashion when the bat slipped out of Sai Sudharsan's hands after driving Brijesh Sharma for a boundary and landed on the stumps.

Till then, the GT pair had kept up with the asking rate from the get-go without ever seeming to take undue risks.

Gill was at his regal best, getting to his century off 47 deliveries by waltzing down the track to drive Ravindra Jadeja for a four.

In a rare occurrence, Sooryavanshi's knock – his third score in the 90s in the last four innings – was relegated to the background.

On the same pitch that was used for the Eliminator, Sooryavanshi showed a very different side of his game even if a strike rate of 204.25 doesn't suggest so. It told in him taking 31 deliveries to reach his half-century, the slowest of his nine fifty-plus scores in the IPL. He took 14 balls to hit the first of his seven sixes. That wickets fell at the other end didn't deter him. Nor did a blow on the helmet off a Kagiso Rabada bouncer.

It was just that Gill's class on the night, in particular, was a shade superior.

### Impact Index

1 Three batters have scored more than 700 runs for the first time in a season (Sooryavanshi, Gill and Sai Sudharsan)

2 Gill is the first to score two hundreds in IPL playoffs

2 He joins Kohli (5) and Rahul (3) as the captains to smash two or more centuries in the league

3 Sai Sudharsan's hit wicket dismissals in IPL, the most for a batter. He is the first in the history of limited-overs cricket to be out hit wicket in consecutive matches

9 Sai Sudharsan has pulled level with Warner (2016, 2019) for the second-most 50-plus scores in an edition. Only Kohli has more (11 in 2016)

11 Gill and Sai Sudharsan's century stands in T20s, the most ever

167 Gill and Sai Sudharsan's partnership is the highest for any wicket in an IPL playoff contest

700 Sai Sudharsan (2025, 2026) and Gill (2023, 2026) have scored 700-plus runs in two different editions, matching Gayle (2012, 2013) and Kohli (2016, 2024)

Compiled by **ANIRUDH VELAMURI**

**SCOREBOARD**

**RAJASTHAN ROYALS**
Yashasvi Jaiswal c Prasidh b Siraj 1 *(2b)*, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi c Prasidh b Rabada 96 *(47b, 8x4, 7x6)*, Dhruv Jurel c Gill b Rabada 7 *(6b, 1x4)*, Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 45 *(35b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Riyan Parag c Rabada b Holder 11 *(6b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Dasun Shanaka c Buttler b Holder 3 *(9b)*, Jofra Archer c Buttler b Prasidh 7 *(4b, 1x6)*, Donovan Ferreira (not out) 38 *(11b, 2x4, 4x6)*; Extras (w-6): 6; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 214.

**FALL OF WICKETS**
1-2 (Jaiswal, 0.4 overs), 2-9 (Jurel, 1.5), 3-101 (Parag, 9.3), 4-109 (Shanaka, 11.3), 5-118 (Archer, 12.4), 6-172 (Sooryavanshi, 17.2).

**TITANS BOWLING**
Siraj 4-0-42-1, Rabada 4-0-35-2, Prasidh 4-0-42-1, Washington 2-0-23-0, Holder 4-0-27-2, Rashid 2-0-45-0.

**GUJARAT TITANS**
Sai Sudharsan hit wicket b Brijesh 58 *(32b, 8x4, 1x6)*, Shubman Gill lbw b Archer 104 *(53b, 15x4, 3x6)*, Jos Buttler (not out) 9 *(9b)*, Washington Sundar c Ferreira b Burger 16 *(9b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Rahul Tewatia **(Impact Player for Siraj)** (not out) 17 *(9b, 2x4, 1x6)*; Extras (b-4, w-11): 15; Total (for three wkts. in 18.4 overs): 219.

**FALL OF WICKETS**
1-167 (Sai Sudharsan, 12.5), 2-182 (Gill, 14.6), 3-201 (Washington, 17.1).

**ROYALS BOWLING**
Archer 4-0-45-1, Burger 4-0-35-1, Brijesh 3.4-0-44-1, Deshpande **(Impact Player for Jaiswal)** 3-0-34-0, Yash Raj 2-0-29-0, Jadeja 2-0-28-0.

**Toss:** Royals; **PoM:** Gill.

*Titans won by seven wickets with eight balls remaining.*

# Fonseca knocks out Djokovic; Swiatek advances

**Incredible comeback:** Fonseca gives vent to his emotions after bouncing back from two sets down to oust Djokovic. AFP & REUTERS

**FRENCH OPEN**

**Agence France-Presse**
PARIS

Brazilian teenager Joao Fonseca, the highly rated 19-year-old who is itching to make his Grand Slam breakthrough, ended Novak Djokovic's pursuit of a record 25th Grand Slam title with a marathon five-set win over the Serb in the third round of the French Open here on Friday.

Fonseca, seeded 28th, bounced back to get the better of the third seed 4-6, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5, 7-5 in four hours and 53 minutes.

Earlier, four-time women's champion Iga Swiatek defeated Magda Linette 6-4, 6-4 to book her place in the last 16.

Third seed Swiatek dug herself out of an early 2-0 hole against the 35th-ranked Linette, who had won their most recent meeting at Miami in March.

Swiatek broke three times in the opening set to nose ahead, and then surged into a 4-1 lead in the second set.

The 24-year-old overcame a stumble as she tried to close it out, before sealing victory to set up an intriguing match-up with the in-form Marta Kostyuk.

"It was a good match. I played much better than Miami," said Swiatek, who moved to appoint Francisco Roig, a long-time coach of Rafael Nadal, in the wake of her loss to Linette two months ago.

Kostyuk, the 15th seed, continued her fine run with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Switzerland's Viktorija Golubic.

She is unbeaten in 15 matches on clay this season following titles in Madrid and Rouen.

Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva also swept into the last 16 with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Czech 27th seed Marie Bouzkova.

The eighth-seeded Andreeva goes on to face Jil Teichmann on Sunday for a place in the quarterfinals. Teichman put paid to the aspirations of the tenth seed and 2023 runner-up Karolina Muchova by winning 6-1, 7-5.

In the men's section, 11th-seeded Russian overcame Nuno Borges of Portugal 7-5, 7-6(2), 7-6(2) to book a place in the fourth round.

In doubles, it was a mixed day for Indian players. Sriram Balaji partnering Brazil's Marcelo Demoliner got the better of the German duo of Jakob Schnaitter and Mark Wallner 7-5, 6-2 in their second-round match while Yuki Bhambri and Michael Venus of New Zealand suffered a 3-6, 4-6 loss to the Italian pair of Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori.

Meanwhile on Thursday, Ben Shelton, the American fifth seed, slipped to a 4-6, 5-7, 4-6 defeat against Belgian Raphael Collignon.

**THE RESULTS**

**Men: Third round:** 27-Jodar (Esp) bt Michelsen (USA) 7-6(2), 6-7(5), 4-6, 6-3, 6-3; 11-Rublev (Rus) bt Borges (Por) 7-5, 7-6(2), 7-6(2); 28-Fonseca (Bra) bt 3-Djokovic (Srb) 4-6, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5, 7-5.

**Second round:** Berrettini (Ita) bt 22-Rinderknech (Fra) 6-4, 6-4, 6-4; Comesana (Arg) bt 14-Darderi (Ita) 7-6(5), 4-6, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4; 19-Tiafoe (USA) bt Hurkacz (Pol) 6-7(5), 7-6(5), 6-4, 6-7(1), 6-4; Arnaldi (Ita) bt Tsitsipas (Gre) 7-6(2), 5-7, 6-3, 6-2; Collignon (Bel) bt 5-Shelton (USA) 6-4, 7-5, 6-4; 4-Auger-Aliassime (Can) bt Burruchaga (Arg) 4-6, 6-0, 7-5, 6-1; 31-Nakashima (USA) bt van Assche (Fra) 6-7(5), 6-4, 5-7, 6-1, 6-3.

**Doubles: Second round:** Balaji (Ind) & Demoliner (Bra) bt Schnaitter (Ger) & Wallner (Ger) 7-5, 6-2; Bolelli (Ita) & Vavassori (Ita) bt Yuki (Ind) & Venus (NZ) 6-3, 6-4.

**Women: Third round:** 7-Svitolina (Ukr) bt Korpatsch (Ger) 6-2, 6-3; Wang (Chn) bt Starodubtseva (Ukr) 6-3, 7-5; 15-Kostyuk (Ukr) bt Golubic (Sui) 6-4, 6-3; 3-Swiatek (Pol) bt Linette (Pol) 6-4, 6-4; 8-Andreeva (Rus) bt 27-Bouzkova (Cze) 6-4, 6-2; Teichmann (Sui) bt 10-Muchova (Cze) 6-1, 7-5; 18-Cirstea (Rou) bt Sierra (Arg) 6-0, 6-0.

**Second round:** 9-Mboko (Can) bt Siniakova (Cze) 5-7, 6-4, 6-2; 28-Potapova (Aut) bt Boulter (GBr) 5-7, 6-4, 6-2; 22-Kalinskaya (Rus) bt Korneeva (Rus) 7-6(2), 6-4.

**Fallen seeds:**

**Men:** 3-Djokovic, 5-Shelton, 14-Darderi, 22-Rinderknech.

**Women:** 10-Muchova, 27-Bouzkova.

### Saturday's Picks

**MEN**

**4**-Auger-Aliassime vs **31**-Nakashima

**10**-Cobolli vs **18**-Tien

**19**-Tiafoe vs Faria

**25**-Francisco Cerundolo vs Svajda

Berrettini vs Comesana

**WOMEN**

**1**-Salabenka vs Kasatkina

**4**-Gauff vs Potapova

**6**-Anisimova vs Parry

**9**-Mboko vs **19**-Keys

**16**-Osaka vs **17**-Jovic

**Bankable asset:** Coach Scaloni will have high hopes on Messi in Argentina's title defence. AFP

# Messi to captain Argentina at the WC

**Agence France-Presse**
BUENOS AIRES

Lionel Messi will captain Argentina at the FIFA World Cup, national coach Lionel Scaloni announced on Thursday as he unveiled his 26-man squad.

Messi, 38, had not confirmed whether he would play in what will be a record-breaking sixth tournament for the Argentine superstar. But it was assumed the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner would again lead Argentina's defence, four years after lifting the trophy in Qatar.

Meanwhile, Real Madrid's Franco Mastantuono was excluded from the squad. Eighteen-year-old Mastantuono is considered one of the brightest prospects in Argentine football.

**The squad: Goalkeepers:** Emiliano Martinez, Geronimo Rulli, Juan Musso; **Defenders:** Gonzalo Montiel, Nahuel Molina, Lisandro Martinez, Nicolas Otamendi, Leonardo Balerdi, Cristian Romero, Facundo Medina, Nicolas Tagliafico; **Midfielders:** Leandro Paredes, Rodrigo de Paul, Exequiel Palacios, Enzo Fernandez, Alexis MacAllister, Giovani Lo Celso, Valentin Barco; **Attackers:** Lionel Messi, Nicolas Paz, Thiago Almada, Nicolas Gonzalez, Julian Alvarez, Giuliano Simeone, Lautaro Martinez, and Jose Manuel Lopez.

## INBRIEF

### Suruchi claims women's 10m air pistol gold; Esha gets silver

It was double delight for India in the ISSF World Cup in Munich on Friday as Suruchi Inder Singh, *right in pic,* struck gold and Esha Singh won silver in the women's 10m air pistol. Suruchi shot 242.1 to defend the gold she won last year while Esha had a 241.2 for silver. South Korea's Choo Gaeun won bronze. India now has two gold and one silver in the year's second ISSF World Cup leg, with the two mixed events in rifle and pistol left to be played on Saturday.

### India beats Australia, takes 2-1 lead in women's hockey series

India struck two field goals to defeat host Australia in the third game to take a 2-1 lead in the four-match women's friendly hockey series, in Perth on Friday. India found the breakthrough through Sonam (36th minute) before doubling the lead when Lalremsiami (49th) found the net. India had lost 1-2 against Australia in the series opener but bounced back strongly to beat the host 4-2 in the shootout the second match. The fourth and final match will be played on Saturday at the same venue.

### Chamari to lead Lanka in Women's T20 World Cup

Sri Lanka has announced its 15-member squad for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026, to be held in England and Wales. The team will be led by Chamari Athapaththu, who brings immense experience to the side, having featured in all nine previous editions of the tournament.

**The squad:** Chamari Athapaththu (Capt.), Hasini Perera, Vishmi Gunarathne, Harshitha Samarawickrama, Imesha Dulani, Nilakshika Silva, Kaveesha Dilhari, Hansima Karunarathne, Kaushini Nuthyangana, Sugandika Dassanayaka, Nimasha Madushani, Shashini Gimhani, Kawya Kavindi, Malki Madara and Mithali Ayodhya.

**LIVE TELECAST**

**French Open:** Sony Sports Ten 2, 3, 5 & LIV, 2.30 p.m. & 12 a.m. (Sunday)

**England Women vs. India Women:** 2nd T20I, Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 7 p.m.

**Champions League (final):** Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 9.30 p.m.

# Carlsen roars back with a victory over Gukesh

The Norwegian converts his advantage to win with black; Praggnanandhaa's aggressive approach helps him prevail in Armageddon; both Divya and Humpy go down in the women's event

**NORWAY CHESS**

**C. Shyam Sundar**
OSLO

**The going gets tough:** Carlsen piled on Gukesh's agony as the Indian suffered his third successive defeat. FLICKR/NORWAY CHESS

Is the king's crown slipping away? Questions began swirling around Magnus Carlsen's form as he lost two of his first three matches in Norway Chess at Deichman Bjorvika.

The World No. 1, however, silenced Doubting Thomases with a solid performance in the fourth round on Thursday, punishing World champion D. Gukesh for his late errors, to roar back into contention. Carlsen, whose table slam after losing to the Indian Grandmaster at the same tournament last year drew a lot of attention, clinically converted the advantage to win with black pieces.

**Relieved**

"I understood what I had to do to win, and I did it. That's why I feel so relieved," Carlsen said. "I wouldn't say I was super motivated today (Thursday). I kind of had enough after playing really poorly for three days in a row with very little time. Today, I didn't have a lot of expectations, but I was happy with the way things went in the opening [phase]," the 35-year-old added.

R. Praggnanandhaa had the better of the exchanges against Vincent Keymer in the classical contest but couldn't grab full points.

His aggressive approach brought him success in Armageddon and kept him in second spot behind Alireza Firouzja, who went down to Wesley So in Armageddon.

It wasn't a good day for the Indian women as Koneru Humpy and Divya Deshmukh lost to Zhu Jiner and Anna Muzychuk respectively. The tournament will resume on Saturday after Friday's rest day.

**The results: Fourth round: Open:** Wesley So (USA, 5.5) bt Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 8.5) in Armageddon; D. Gukesh (3.5) lost to Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 4.5); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 4) lost to R. Praggnanandhaa (6) in Armageddon.

**Women:** Koneru Humpy (3) lost to Zhu Jiner (Chn, 5.5) in Armageddon; Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz, 7) bt Ju Wenjun (Chn, 4) in Armageddon; Divya Deshmukh (5.5) lost to Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 5.5) in Armageddon.

*(The writer is in Oslo at the invitation of Norway Chess).*

**Success mantra:** Assaubayeva feels having enough sleep is vital before going for a battle on the board. FLICKR/NORWAY CHESS

## Chess players and their methods for stress relief

**C. Shyam Sundar**
OSLO

Chess is a quiet battle of minds. It can test players' mental toughness and take a toll on their well-being. Current players have turned to stress management with each having their own method to find a way out.

The World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen is known to use golf sessions for stress relief even during tournaments. The Norwegian is said to have enjoyed a game on the links during big-ticket events, including the World Cup.

If that's Carlsen's way of taking his mind off chess, German Grandmaster Vincent Keymer "doesn't spend many hours on something else". "Usually, my preparation involves mostly chess. To me, it's important to find at least a few hours a day where you're not thinking about chess, mostly for mental rest."

For American Wesley So, it is about having a sound sleep and staying away from electronic devices. "Once a tournament gets going, I try to sleep well at night. During game days, I try not to look at electronic gadgets too much because it makes my eyes tired. On match eve, I listen to some music and prefer a walk."

Indian GM R. Praggnanandhaa said: "We mostly prepare before the games and try to rest as much as possible to balance both." Kazakh player Bibisara Assaubayeva felt that taking rest was the best way to prepare. "Sleeping a lot is the trick for resting and not thinking about the game".

**On top:** The Karnataka cagers reigned supreme in the men's event.

## Chhattisgarh and Karnataka triumph

**Sports Bureau**

Karnataka and Chhattisgarh won the men's and women's titles, respectively, in the National junior basketball championships at Puducherry on Friday.

**The results: Men: final:** Karnataka 83 (Anshul Sai 19, Samarth Manur 19, Adithya Vittal Shenoi 18, Vijayeendra Vedanthi 14, Harshan Yatish 11) bt Haryana 75 (Rahul 27, Sachin 16, Mayank Khanchi 14, Ajay 13); **third-place match:** Rajasthan 85 (Mohammed Raza Khan 27, Arpit Meena 20, Manish Kumar Maal 19, Bhupendra Singh Rathore 12) bt Chandigarh 78 (Ajay 18, Nikhil 17, Tushar 12, Rupendar 12). **Women's final:** Chhattisgarh 55 (Divya Rangari 22, Anjali Kodapae 14) bt Kerala 51 (Liya Maria 12, Subadra Jaykumar 12, T. Vaigha 11); **third-place match:** Tamil Nadu 58 (Rithika Rajasekharan Mekala 16, Guru Dharshini 11, Sephora T. Thadeus 10) bt Karnataka 54 (Shravani Shivanna 15, Nidhi Umesh 15, P.P. Deepika 10).

# Satwik-Chirag and Dhruv-Tanisha pairs advance to the semifinals

**BADMINTON**

**Press Trust of India**
SINGAPORE

The star men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty and the mixed doubles duo of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto moved into the semifinals but P.V. Sindhu and Lakshya Sen lost in the quarterfinals at the Singapore Open Super 750 badminton tournament here on Friday.

Satwik and Chirag, the fourth seeds here, came from a game down to get the better of Malaysia's Khai Xing Kang and Aaron Tai 19-21, 21-17, 21-13 in a contest that lasted 65 minutes. The Indian pair will now be up against top seeds and reigning World champions Kim Won Ho and Seo Seung Jae of Korea.

**Closer to glory:** Dhruv and Tanisha made the last four when their opponents retired. INSTAGRAM/BAI_MEDIA

Dhruv and Tanisha advanced to the last four after third seed Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei of Malaysia retired during the opening game while leading 18-16.

The Indian pair will next face Japan's Yuichi Shimogami and Sayaka Hobara for a place in the final. Sindhu lacked the consistency required to trouble World No. 1 An Se Young, going down 17-21, 14-21.

**Losing streak**

The loss extended Sindhu's winless run against the reigning Olympic champion to nine matches.

In men's singles, Lakshya bowed out, 19-21, 21-15, 15-21 to Japan's Koki Watanabe in a 78-minute clash.

# If we stick to our plan, results will follow: u-18 coach Rani

**HOCKEY**

**Anirudh Velamuri**
HYDERABAD

**Expressing optimism:** Rani says the team can draw confidence from its meticulous preparation. FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

As the Indian women's team gears up for the under-18 Asia Cup in Japan, there is both anticipation and belief that this group can announce itself on the continental stage.

Months of preparation, including gruelling training camps, and hard-fought exposure matches against Australia in Bhopal have helped fuel that faith. At the centre of the movement is former India captain Rani Rampal, now tasked with guiding the next generation through their first steps in international hockey. "My focus is not on the opponent, we are our own opponent. It doesn't matter what the other teams are doing or not doing," head coach Rani told *The Hindu*.

Placed in Pool A, India will open its campaign against Malaysia on Saturday before taking on South Korea on Sunday and Singapore on Tuesday. The top-two teams from the group will advance to the semifinals on June 5, with the final to be played on June 6. "If we stick to our plan and improve day by day, results will come automatically. For example, we need to have a good penalty corner conversion rate... we need to defend well too."

Rani backed her side to put on a good show and said the nerves of the big stage were actually a good sign. "Nerves are welcome. They show that you care. I have taught my players that if we prepare well, we can draw confidence from it in the tournament. We can believe that we did our very best. We don't focus on the result, we focus on the process of what we have to do for the result."

The Asia Cup will be a special one for many – maiden international event and the first flight journey – making the excitement in the squad impossible to miss. Even a no-nonsense coach like Rani is not oblivious to these humane elements. "I told them to make good memories. So, maybe 10 years later, they will have incredible stories to look back on".

# Fit-again gymnast Pranati banks on quality training

**Y.B. Sarangi**
KOLKATA

**Priorities:** Pranati wants to perform well this year before thinking about her future. FILE PHOTO: BISWARANJAN ROUT

Experienced gymnast Pranati Nayak is full of confidence after her successful comeback from a six-month injury layoff and is keen to improve her difficulty and execution scores in upcoming elite events - the Asian Championships, the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games.

Pranati, who was out of action after suffering a ligament injury in her ankle in October last year, bounced back this month by securing a silver in vault at the World Challenge Cup in Tashkent.

"I had viral fever before the competition. I didn't do a lot of repetitions. My coach gave me quality training [instead of quantity] to save my energy. He asked me to land just two vaults. I just wanted to increase my confidence," said Pranati, on her maiden international silver medal, at a virtual press conference organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Friday.

Now, Pranati, a three-time Asian bronze medallist, wants to improve her scores in the Asian championships (Zunyi, China, June 18 to 21).

"The Asian Championships is the qualification event for the Asian Games. All the main athletes will be there. So it will be tougher. I'll have to increase my difficulty level. It depends on how the training goes."

Her coach, Ashok Mishra, said: "Now we have started training by giving a double soft mat for soft landing. Her main vault is Tsukahara straight double twist. She won a medal by doing this vault in the 2025 Asian Championships. We'll try to bring it back. The final decision will be taken after seeing the level of competitors. All three competitions (Asian Championships, Commonwealth Games and Asian Games) are really tough.

Having spent 23 years in the sport and suffering several injuries, the 31-year-old Pranati, who trains at the high performance centre in Bhubaneswar, wants to perform well this year before thinking about her future.

# Miracle Star favoured for Chettinad Stud Plate

BENGALURU: Miracle Star, who is in fine fettle, may score an encore in the Chettinad Stud Plate (1,600m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Saturday (May 30). False rails (width about 4.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

**1 UDHAGAMANDALAM PLATE** (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2-00 p.m.: 1. Ark Emperor (5) Akshay K 56, 2. Bhagya (2) Rayan 56, 3. A Great Buzz (6) Pavan 54.5, 4. Evolvita (3) Darshan 54.5, 5. Haniel (4) Arul 54.5 and 6. Perfect Dream (1) Trevor 54.5.
**1. ARK EMPEROR, 2. HANIEL**

**2 CHETTINAD STUD PLATE** (1,600m), rated 80 & above, 2-30: 1. Golden Thunder (4) Antony 63, 2. Star Glory (3) Saurav Rawat 58, 3. Queen Of Kings (5) Darshan 54.5, 4. Miracle Star (2) Suraj 53 and 5. Promiseofthefuture (1) Neeraj 50.
**1. MIRACLE STAR, 2. PROMISEOFTHEFUTURE**

**3 ELITE FORCE PLATE** (1,400m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 3-00: 1. Born To Rise (7) Yash 56, 2. Friedrich (8) Akshay K 56, 3. Haboob (2) A.A. Vikrant 56, 4. Knotty Emperor (5) G. Vivek 56, 5. Panache (3) L.A. Rozario 56, 6. Rampage (9) Sandesh 56, 7. Super Charm (–) (–) 56, 8. The Archer (6) Trevor 56, 9. Brave Heart (4) D. Patel 54.5 and 10. Estelle (1) Antony 54.5.
**1. THE ARCHER, 2. KNOTTY EMPEROR, 3. FRIEDRICH**

**4 MARILINGAIAH MEMORIAL TROPHY** (1,200m), rated 40 to 65, 3-30: 1. Royal Deccan (7) Aleemuddin 62, 2. True Punch (3) Antony 62, 3. Victoria Doresaani (–) (–) 61, 4. Refined Aggression (1) Trevor 57.5, 5. Defence Counsel (8) D. Patel 56.5, 6. Felisa (10) Pavan 55.5, 7. Thessalian (9) G. Vivek 55, 8. Ziva (4) Asirvatham 54.5, 9. See The Light (5) Sandesh 53.5, 10. Splendid Dream (2) Akshay K 53 and 11. Lauterbrunnen (11) M. Rajesh K 52.5.
**1. REFINED AGGRESSION, 2. SPLENDID DREAM, 3. THESSALIAN**

**5 SIR. M. VISVESVARAYA MEMORIAL TROPHY** (1,400m), rated 60 to 85, 4-00: 1. Efficacy (2) Suraj 62, 2. Money Bags (1) Trevor 58.5, 3. Crosswater (3) Aleemuddin 57.5, 4. Irish Coffee (4) Arul 57, 5. Rodney (6) Pavan 56.5 and 6. Lux Aeterna (5) Aditya W 53.
**1. MONEY BAGS, 2. EFFICACY**

**6 ROMANTIC DANCE PLATE** (1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 4-30: 1. Bulletproof (4) Trevor 61, 2. Alamgir (2) Suraj 60.5, 3. Prince Of Wales (11) Antony 58, 4. Lena (8) A. Asbar 57, 5. Makoto (7) Vishal S 57, 6. Adelanto (1) M. Rajesh K 56.5, 7. Feeling Good (9) Vishal 56.5, 8. Larissa (10) Shreyas S 55, 9. The Golden Dream (5) Kiran Rai 54.5, 10. Agape (12) Arul 53, 11. Blazing Fire (3) Vinod Shinde 52.5 and 12. Sweet Winner (6) A. Ramu 51.5.
**1. BULLETPROOF, 2. ALAMGIR, 3. PRINCE OF WALES**

**7 PRINCE KHARTOUM PLATE** (1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 5-y-o & over, 5-00: 1. Corinthian (8) Trevor 62, 2. Storm Shadow (5) Akshay K 61.5, 3. Southern Force (–) (–) 60.5, 4. Flash (2) Rayan 60, 5. Stravinsky (3) Suraj 59.5, 6. Chotipari (4) Laxman S 58, 7. Stentorian (6) M. Prabhakaran 57.5, 8. Roadrunner (7) Aditya W 54.5 and 9. Windcleaver (1) Mukesh 52.5.
**1. CORINTHIAN, 2. STRAVINSKY, 3. STORM SHADOW**
Day's best: **MIRACLE STAR**
Double: **REFINED AGGRESSION – CORINTHIAN**
Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Mini Jkt: 4, 5, 6 and 7; Tr (i): 2, 3 and 4; (ii): 5, 6 and 7.

PROPERTYPLUS
HOMES AND REAL ESTATE NEWS

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THE HINDU

# Decoding NCR realty:

## Rates, rules and returns

From RERA regulations to repo-linked loans, here's what investors need to know before entering Delhi-NCR's fast-evolving property market

Shashank Gupta

Delhi-NCR real estate investors need to understand government regulations, mortgage processes and interest rate movements to succeed in the fast-growing Indian property market. The infrastructure development of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and RRTS expansions will create new investment opportunities in Greater Noida West and Dwarka Expressway through its time-based financing decisions.

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (RERA) serves as the main law requiring developers to register their projects with state authorities such as UPRERA in Noida-Greater Noida and HRERA in Gurugram.

The system protects investors from project delays and fraudulent activities through its requirement to disclose approval processes, project timelines and ownership details. T

he Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) provides interest subsidies to affordable and middle-income groups through Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), which continues its subsidies until 2026, thereby increasing buyer access and stabilising the entire market.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

### Smart borrowing

Investors who want to achieve optimal returns should evaluate loan-to-value (LTV) ratios, which the RBI regulates between 75% and 80% because this requires them to make a minimum down payment of 20% to 25%, which applies to luxury properties in Gurugram and South Delhi. The most beneficial option for loans is floating rates, which link to Repo-Linked Lending Rate (RLLR) and Marginal Cost of Lending Rate (MCLR) because customers who negotiate their bank spread between 2% and 3% will save thousands of rupees throughout their loan period. The costs increase because processing fees, which range from 0.25% to 1% of the loan amount, and prepayment penalties exist, but customers who maintain a credit score above 750 will receive better loan conditions from lenders such as SBI and HDFC. The tax advantages provided by Sections 24(b) and 80C create additional benefits for investors who choose to invest in the National Capital Region.

The RBI maintains its current repo rate of 5.25% since February 2026 after implementing 125 basis point reductions during 2025 which creates economic stability through ongoing robust economic development and active inflation management.

The NCR home loan rates between 7.2% and 9.5% per annum enable prime borrowers to achieve lower EMIs while buying mid-range and luxury homes. The current interest rates enable key micro-markets to achieve price growth between 6% and 10% while generating rental yields between 5% and 8%.

Investors must pay attention to the marginal propensity to consume (MPC) meetings because these meetings determine future changes, which depend on inflation rates and international market conditions. The demand from end buyers increases when rates decrease, which results in higher investment returns for infrastructure projects located in NCR hotspots.

The most effective way to succeed through RERA-registered projects enables you to reduce risks associated with construction projects which exist in developing areas. The budget should allocate 25% to 30% for initial costs, which should include a stamp duty charge of 6% to 7%, to achieve smooth financing processes. The current market environment requires borrowers to assess their financial requirements by negotiating spreads and fees, while lenders offer floating rates based on the 5.25% repo rate.

The Dwarka Expressway area provides investment opportunities which will grow because of PMAY demand and infrastructure development.

### Final step

The final step requires you to work with advisors who will help you maximise tax deductions while selecting loans that match your financial goals.

Investors in NCR can achieve high returns by understanding the policy-loan-rate system, which prepares them for upcoming market growth.

*The writer is director of RPS Group.*

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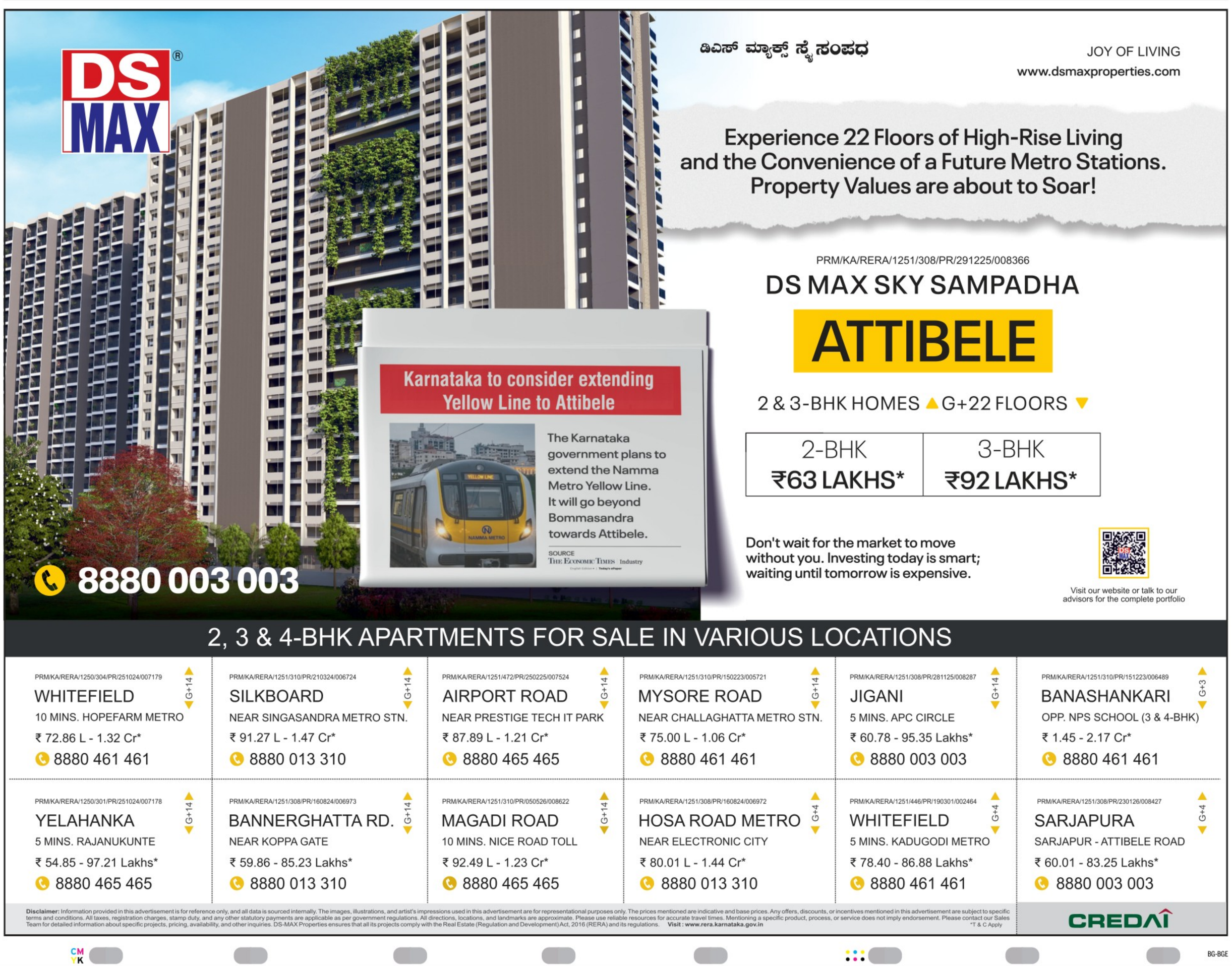

**Memorable outing:** Nandani made a big impression as her triple strike took the wind out of England's sails. AP

# Jemimah, Yastika and Nandani help India draw first blood

The two batters add 126 for the third wicket as the Women in Blue recover to post 188 for seven; the debutant pacer claims three for 34

INDIA IN ENGLAND

**Press Trust of India**
CHELMSFORD

Jemimah Rodrigues and Yastika Bhatia struck fluent half-centuries before debutant pacer Nandani Sharma starred with the ball as India defeated England by 38 runs to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match T20I series here on Thursday.

Playing without regular captain Harmanpreet Kaur, India recovered from a disastrous start to post 188 for seven and then restricted England to 150 for eight at the County Ground.

Stand-in skipper Smriti Mandhana got out for a golden duck, while her opening partner Shafali Verma fell for two with Lauren Bell giving a fiery start to England after it opted to bowl.

But Jemimah made 69 off 40 balls (10x4, 1x6) and Yastika marked her return to the format after two years with a brisk 54 off 40 deliveries. She smashed nine fours and a six in her maiden T20I fifty.

Yastika and Jemimah counter-attacked brilliantly, stitching together a 126-run stand for the third wicket off just 76 balls to turn the innings around.

Yastika, returning after knee surgery and playing her first T20I since April 2024, raced to her fifty off 31 balls.

Jemimah was equally aggressive, bringing up her half-century off 31 deliveries.

England's sloppy fielding compounded its problems before Charlie Dean provided some relief by running out Yastika and then sending back Jemimah in the same over.

India briefly lost momentum as Richa Ghosh and Bharti Fulmali got out cheaply, but Deepti Sharma's unbeaten 22 (13b, 4x4) took India close to the 190-run mark.

In reply, England never quite recovered after losing Sophia Dunkley (16) and Alice Capsey (six) in four overs.

Amy Jones kept the chase alive with a fighting 67 (48b, 9x4), sharing a 64-run stand with Heather Knight (21).

Knight, who struggled in her 24-ball knock, became England Women's most-capped player across formats with 310 appearances, overtaking Charlotte Edwards.

Nandani turned the game decisively in India's favour as she scalped Jones in the 16th over before removing Dani Gibson off the next ball. She then dismissed Wong to finish with impressive figures of three four 34. Kranti Gaud claimed two wickets while Shree Charani and Deepti chipped in with one wicket apiece as England fell well short.

**The scores:** India 188/7 in 20 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 69, Yastika Bhatia 54, Lauren Bell 3/34) bt England 150/8 in 20 overs (Amy Jones 67, Heather Knight 21, Nandani Sharma 3/34, Kranti Gaud 2/24).
**Toss:** England. **PoM:** Jemimah.

# All eyes on Vinesh as Asian Games trials get underway

**Uthra Ganesan**
NEW DELHI

Vinesh is yet to confirm her participation. FILE PHOTO: SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Having received the Supreme Court's go-ahead to participate in the Asian Games selection trials, the spotlight will firmly be on Vinesh Phogat at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium on Saturday.

The SC, however, made its directive to the Wrestling Federation of India, allowing Vinesh to participate, conditional with the next hearing on Monday. Vinesh, who had been barred from participating in the open ranking tournament earlier this month, is yet to confirm her participation, having previously registered in the 57kg.

With trials scheduled in the six Olympic weight categories - 50kg, 53kg, 57kg, 62kg, 68kg, 76kg - her participation would add interest to what is likely to be an already exciting outing, especially in the lower weight categories. Antim Panghal, who lost out in the trials for the Asian Championships, and Minakshi are expected to renew their rivalry in the 53kg category while Manisha Bhanwala will be looking to assert her claim in the 57kg section.

It would also be interesting to see how many from the recent under-23 Asian Championships turn up for the trials across the six categories, given the fact that five of the six, including Tapasya in the 57kg, won gold in Vietnam three days ago. The WFI had listed only medal winners at three events - National Championships 2025, Federation Cup 2026 and the under-20 Nationals 2026 - as eligible for participation, refusing Vinesh entry for not participating in the designated competitions.

The men's freestyle and Greco-Roman trials would be held on Sunday in Lucknow.

# Pooja sets high jump National record

**Press Trust of India**
HONG KONG

Teenaged high jump star Pooja Singh shattered the National senior record en route winning the gold medal to lead a strong Indian show on the second day of the Asian U-20 athletics championships on Friday.

The 19-year-old sailed over 1.93m to better Sahana Kumari's mark of 1.92m that had stood since 2012. Her personal best before Friday was the 1.90m she had cleared during the Indian Athletics Series meet in New Delhi in April 2026.

Nitin Gupta won gold in the men's 5000m race walk event, clocking 19 minutes 47.49 seconds, and Amanat Kamboj picked up a yellow metal in the women's discus with an effort of 52.24m. Rahul Jakhar won India's fourth gold of the day in the decathlon with 7185 points.

Sadhana Devi (silver in women's triple jump), Upkar (silver in men's decathlon) and Neeru Pathak (bronze in women's 400m) were the other medal winners on the second day.

# Defending champion PSG stands between Arsenal and its maiden crown

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

**Agence France-Presse**
BUDAPEST

**Race against time:** Ballon d'Or winner Dembele is likely to be fit after a calf problem. GETTY IMAGES

Arsenal seeks to finally conquer Europe by wresting the Champions League crown from holder Paris Saint-Germain, which is itself targeting back-to-back titles in Budapest on Saturday.

Luis Enrique's French champion is the favourite to defend the trophy and establish an era of dominance in its post-superstar age. Homing in on a career third Champions League trophy as a coach, Enrique cleaned house after arriving in 2023, and created a cohesive, hard-working and brilliant PSG side in his image.

Luis Enrique took the side to the semis in his first season, then past Arsenal last year in the final four before crushing Inter Milan to claim the Parisians a first European Cup.

By contrast, Arsenal's team has been slow-cooked over nearly seven years by Mikel Arteta, without the overwhelming financial muscle of PSG or domestic rival Manchester City.

Both teams arrive in Hungary with different reputations in the eyes of the world for the way they play. PSG is the tournament's top scorer with 44 goals, while Arsenal is the team that has conceded the fewest, shipping just six and is unbeaten.

Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele, likely to be fit after a calf problem, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Desire Doue lead a thrilling attacking cast for a PSG side that edged Bayern Munich 6-5 in the semifinals.

Beyond the class of winger Bukayo Saka, Arsenal stands out more for its grit and defensive discipline, with centre-back pairing Gabriel and William Saliba its regular stand-out performers, as well as midfield powerhouse Declan Rice.

Arteta's team will embrace the underdog role, keeping the champion at bay and leaning on its superior set-piece quality.

## Budapest battle in numbers

1 The PSG-Arsenal title decider marks the first Champions League (CL) final between clubs from two capital cities (Paris and London)

1 Sides from England and France will lock horns in a UEFA major men's competition summit clash for the first time in history

3 Enrique will lead a team in the CL final for the third time. He guided Barcelona to the crown in 2015 and took PSG all the way last year

4 Arteta is the fourth Spanish manager to feature in a title contest with a non-Spanish side. The other three were Benitez (Liverpool), Guardiola (City) and Enrique (PSG)

5 PSG has won its last five CL knockout ties against English teams

9 Arsenal's clean sheets during this Champions League campaign, one short of equalling the record in an edition

14 The Gunners are on a 14-match unbeaten run in Europe's elite club tournament

44 Goals PSG has scored, highest in the competition this season